The Development of a Critical Practice in Post-Apartheid South African Photography

by

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

ABSTRACT

South African photography in the 20th century was dominated by the documentary genre. This genre has its roots in 19th century Modernist and colonialist belief in the accuracy of the camera as a tool of representation, and faith in the camera's objectivity and ability to present empirical evidence and 'truth'. These positivist notions were carried into South African documentary practice during the apartheid era. Apartheid-era South African documentary photography was particularly focused on exposing the socio-political ills of apartheid in order to gain support for the liberation movement, both locally and abroad. It was serious and didactic in its purpose and did not allow for creative responses to the medium, as the camera was seen as a 'weapon' of the struggle.

The 1990s saw the beginning of the emergence of a liberated South Africa. The documentary imperative to record and expose apartheid practices was now increasingly redundant. Photographers, particularly after the elections, were faced with a 'crisis' of sorts in documentary as the main focus of their subject had been removed. The upshot of this was that documentary photographers had to find new subjects, which they had to approach in different ways.

The arrival of Postmodernism in South Africa coincided with the demise of apartheid. It had in essence been kept at bay by what seemed to be the more pressing issues of the struggle. Postmodern art and its theoretical base, post-structuralism, argued for an erosion of the previously fixed concepts of genre, and allowed for the mixing of the previously separate categories of 'documentary' and 'art'. There was a radical questioning of previously fixed constructs of race, identity, class and gender. The erosion of the documentary imperative to record allowed for more creative responses to the medium than ever before. Artists were able to experiment technically, with video, multi-media, digital photography, historical processes, colour, composite work and interactive pieces.

In this thesis I explore the above-mentioned shift and situate my practical work within this contemporary paradigm.

OPSOMMING

Op die gebied van fotografie is die toneel in Suid-Afrika in die 20ste eeu deur die dokumentêre genre oorheers. Die genre het sy oorsprong in 'n Modernistiese en kolonialistiese, 19de-eeuse siening, naamlik dat die kamera 'n objektiewe en akkurate voorstellingsmiddel is waarmee empiriese bewyse ingesamel en die "waarheid" uitgebeeld kan word. Hierdie positiwistiese uitkyk is tydens die apartheidsjare op die dokumentêre praktyk in Suid-Afrika oorgedra. Tydens hierdie era was dokumentêre fotografie daarop gemik om die sosiopolitieke euwels van Suid-Afrika onder apartheid bloot te lê, ten einde sowel binnelands as buitelands vir die bevrydingsbewegings steun te werf. Met hierdie gewigtige en didaktiese doel voor oë, was daar min ruimte vir 'n kreatiewe hantering van die medium, aangesien die kamera as 'n "wapen" in die stryd teen apartheid gesien is.

Die 1990's het die begin van Suid-Afrika se bevryding ingelui. Die dokumentêre imperatief om apartheidsdade op rekord te stel en aan die groot klok te hang, het vervaag. Fotograwe het 'n soort "krisis" in die gesig gestaar, veral na die verkiesing, want die onderwerp van hulle fokus het verdwyn. Die resultaat was dat dokumentêre fotograwe nuwe temas moes vind, wat hulle vanuit 'n ander oogpunt moes benader.

In Suid-Afrika het die koms van Postmodernisme met die ondergang van apartheid saamgeval. Voorheen is dit in wese oorskadu deur oënskynlik belangriker kwessies rondom die "struggle". Postmoderne kuns en die teoretiese grondslag daarvan, naamlik post-strukturalisme, bepleit 'n beweging weg van die vaste begrip van genre wat voorheen gegeld het. Hiervolgens raak 'n vermenging van die voorheen afsonderlike kategorieë 'dokumentêr' en 'kuns' moontlik. Dit bring ook 'n radikale bevraagtekening mee van die konstrukte ras, identiteit, klas en geslag, wat voorheen as vaste indelings beskou is. Die verflouing van die dokumentêre imperatief om dinge op rekord te stel, maak dit moontlik om op 'n meer kreatiewe wyse as ooit tevore met die medium om te gaan. Kunstenaars kan nou met die tegniese sy van fotografie eksperimenteer: video, multimedia, digitale fotografie, historiese prosesse, kleur, saamgestelde werke en interaktiewe stukke.

In hierdie tesis kyk ek op verkennende wyse na die veranderings waarna hierbo verwys word, en situeer ek my praktiese werk binne hierdie kontemporêre paradigma.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CRITICAL PRACTICE IN POST – APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICAN PHOTOGRAPHY

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INTRODUCTION

> 'So, my friend, after the example of the Phoenicians, you charted your course by the stars?'
> 'No,' said Menippus, 'it was amongst the stars themselves I journeyed.'
>
> Given the mass of evidence, there is no plausible hypothesis but reality.
> Given the mass of evidence to the contrary, there is no solution but illusion.
> (Baudrillard 1996: unpaginated)

Baudrillard's wry and whimsical comment encapsulates a shift which took place in the closing decade of the 20th century, when South African photography moved away from a mode of representation that was primarily about recording 'reality' towards one which interrogated 'reality' and perceived the pursuit of reality to be illusory.

Much changed in South Africa in the 1990s, socially, politically, economically, culturally and in all aspects of daily life. In order to assimilate and understand the scope of these changes, a reassessment of the past and an analysis of the present in relation to that past, are necessary. Photography is in the process of undergoing such a reassessment. I have chosen to analyse contemporary South African practice in order to try and understand the forces behind these changes, and to determine how they have manifested themselves in visual products.

In this thesis I aim to show that a fundamental shift occurred between apartheid and post-apartheid photographic practice in South Africa. This research is important in a medium which enjoys much currency in all areas of human life, and yet has few definitive South African texts. The lack of a cohesive body of formal literature on South African photography has necessitated the use of newspaper articles, exhibition catalogues and personal communication, amongst other source material.

I will argue that South African photography has drifted from a 'truthful' or 'quasi-objective' paradigm typified by documentary photography, towards a more fluid, creative and arguably 'poetic' form of art which exposes the problems inherent in the assumption that photography is objective, and constitutes not 'art' but 'truth'. This assumption solidified into a code of conventions in documentary photography, which are currently being deconstructed and exposed in post-apartheid photography.

In South Africa from the 1950s, and even more particularly from 1976 onwards, politically or socially committed photographers began to produce 'struggle' photography. 'Struggle' photography is a form of documentary photography that was committed to exposing the injustices of the apartheid government and was clearly regarded as documentary, despite its overt political bias as a tool of resistance politics.

During the 1990s South Africa moved towards full democracy and the first full adult suffrage elections were held in 1994. The intense political focus of documentary photography shifted and fragmented as apartheid was dismantled. Photography became increasingly fluid, blurred and more fictional and creative in response both to local politics and the pressures of an international art world that was itself exploring the instability of structures and conventions previously thought to be fixed.

The assumption of the objectivity of documentary photography has always been persuasive, but is in fact a false one. What is occurring in post-apartheid contemporary South African photography is a demonstration of how photography, like all forms of human expression, is an exploration of our contiguous relationship with the world. There is an acknowledgement of the fact that photography has always been more about art, however much it disguised this, than about an accurate presentation of the truth. This admission renders photography open to analysis, criticism and deconstruction.

As the title of this thesis suggests, the central theme of this inquiry is the emergence of a critical practice in post-apartheid South Africa. This inquiry will involve a comparison between this practice and those of Modernist / colonialist / documentary photography.

The popular belief is that photographs operate at a level of pure denotation, allowing the photograph to be elevated to the status of an authoritative legal document. An aura of neutrality, which is perceived to have an 'informative' or documentary quality, is allowed to develop around the photograph. The word 'document'[1] has been traced to a medieval term for an official paper which was considered as unquestionable evidence and a truthful account to be backed by the authority of the law (Clarke 1997: 145). The tendency to view photography as a 'truthful document' has its roots in empiricism. Applied to photography, empiricism has the power to essentialise 'truth,' and to trade on the idea of truth / proof.

The word 'document' has been allied to non-fiction, facts, and officialdom. From this standpoint the 'photograph represents the real world by simple metonymy: the photograph stands for the object or event' (Sekula 1984: 10). According to Allan Sekula in *Photography Against the Grain*, photographic discourse, and for that matter all discourse, can be described as 'a system of relations between parties engaged in a communicative activity' (1984: 3). He goes on to posit that if discourse can be regarded as a system of information exchange, then all messages are manifestations of interest (1984:3). Sekula believes that many of the messages (such as documentary) sent into the 'public domain' are 'spoken with the voice of anonymous authority' and as a result they deny the possibility of anything other than affirmation.[2] (1984: 3). Documentary photography demands faith from its viewers in its relationship with material forms in the real world.

However, the truth-value of the photographic medium can be questioned. What we need to question is: 'What truth?' and 'Whose truth?' Where do we find the neutral and

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[1] In *The History of Photography from 1839 to the Present* Beaumont Newhall (1982: 137) states:

> The quality of authenticity implicit in the sharply focused, unretouched straight photograph often gives it special value as evidence or proof. Such a photograph can be, according to a dictionary definition, 'documentary,' for Webster defines the noun 'document' as 'an original or official paper relied upon as the basis, proof, or support of anything else; – in its most extended sense, including any writing, book, or other instrument conveying information.

objective frame? Post-structuralist theorists question the idea of an objective truth, because the language used to define 'truth' is a construct.

Although painting has traditionally concerned itself with reality, Susan Sontag (1979: 4) observes that photographs are unlike other visual images because of their relationship to the real. This leads the viewer to mistake photographs for reality. The medium of photography has, as its most distinguishing feature, an unavoidable referentiality. The photograph is imagined to have a solid core of meaning, which is free of cultural determination. It is this that Roland Barthes (1979: 198) calls the 'denotative function' of the photograph. Barthes also recognises another level: that of culturally determined meaning. This is the level of 'connotation' (1979: 198). Photographs therefore have a way of describing which is sometimes misleading, enigmatic, reductive or superficial (Sekula 1984: ix).

John Berger (1982: 92) questions whether a photograph is a cultural artefact or whether it is like 'a footprint in the sand, a trace *naturally* left by something that has passed.' [3] He comes to the conclusion that the answer is both. It is a cultural construction in that the photographer chooses what to photograph, when to photograph, the angle, 'the type of film, the focus, the time-exposure, strength of the developing solution, the sort of paper to print on, the darkness or lightness of the print, the framing of the print' (Berger 1982: 93), toning, manipulation and so forth. The photograph is also a cultural construction in the sense that it belongs to a 'specific social situation, the way of life of the photographer, an argument, an experiment, a way of explaining the world, a book, a newspaper, an

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[2] These messages do not acknowledge the fact that the photographer is already a social creature and is rarely completely 'innocent' or unbiased.

[3] Berger explains the notion of trace in relation to drawing and photography:

> It may clarify what we mean by a *trace* if we ask how a drawing differs from a photograph. A drawing is a translation. That is to say each mark on the paper is consciously related, not only to the real or imagined 'model', but also to every mark and space already set out on the paper. Thus a drawn image or painted image is woven together by the energy ... of countless judgements. Every time a figuration is evoked in a drawing, everything about it has been mediated by consciousness, either intuitively or systematically. In a drawing an apple is *made* round and spherical; in a photograph, the roundness and the light and the shade of the apple are received as a given (Berger: 1982: 95).

exhibition' (Berger 1982: 93). From a certain point onwards, however, the photographer can no longer 'intervene without changing the fundamental character of photography' (Berger 1984: 93). This is the point at which light reflected or emanated from the photographed subject passes through the lens and leaves its 'trace' on the photographic plate. This element of 'trace' is what gives photographs their power. The supposed relationship or causal link between the photographs and other forms in the real world makes the world seem neutral in photographs. Photographs 'pretend' to represent reality, but this is a false assumption.

The conception of the documentary photograph as neutral transcription of the real was dismissed by Benjamin many years ago, when he commented that 'less than ever before does a reproduction of reality tell us anything about that reality and therefore something has had to be *constructed*, something artificial, something set up' (in Solmon-Goddeau 1991: 188). Thus, although documentary images pretend to be of the real world, they are in fact cultural constructions that create a reality according to a conventionalised language. The creation of reality and meaning does not end with the taking of the photograph, but it continues through the social life of the image as it is cropped, captioned, ordered, classified, categorised, published and filed. Each new context recreates its meaning, with different power relations conveying different messages. The photograph is the bearer of that information. There is an implied social reality that continues off camera and outside the frame, since the meaning is not simply contained in the frame but also in the way that information arrives at its consumer through a magazine, newspaper, book, gallery et cetera.[4]

Graham Clarke (1997: 12) asserts that the moment of taking a '... photograph fixes time but also steals time, establishes a hold on the past in which history is sealed, in a continuous present'. A photograph captures an instant in the constant flow of time, an

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[4] To an extreme degree documentary photographic meaning is dependent on context, particularly when looking at photo publications. Reading a photo essay means negotiating images and words, story and caption, and horizontal and vertical progression. Images in newspapers and magazines are often small and hard to see, while captions breaking out of the frame become mini-narratives in themselves.

instant taken out of its context in time. The photograph is a cross-section of time or an occurrence. It is no longer instantaneous, but can be looked at at our leisure. The image now has the power to evoke an imagined time as it inserts the viewer into a fictive time zone.

From the above discussion it is clear that the very nature of documentary photography as evidence of 'truth' is open to question. Diverse authors such as Berger, Barthes and Sekula demonstrated that documentary photography can be regarded as a cultural construct, no less than any other visual art form. As such, it has developed a set of conventions, which can reveal much about the photographers who practise it.

Documentary dominated 20th-century photography as a genre. It represents more than just a way of photographing. It is caught up with a middle-class social ethos. According to Martha Rosler 'documentary photography has come to represent the social conscience of liberal sensibility represented in visual imagery. Photo documentary as a public genre had its moment in the ideological climate of developing state liberalism and the attendant reform movements of the early twentieth century' (Rosler 1989: 303). Documentary photography was often aimed at a middle-class audience by social reformers who hoped to expose, and thus conscientise, the middle classes. It was a form of propaganda that attempted to be noble by raising consciousness. The subject matter of this genre of photography usually involves social issues, social and political injustices, disaster, suffering and human experience. Rosler (1989: 308) says that 'in the liberal documentary, poverty and oppression are almost invariably equated with the misfortunes caused by natural disasters: causality is vague, blame is not assigned, fate cannot be overcome'. Rosler (1989: 305) also states, 'Documentary photography has been more comfortable in the company of moralism than wedded to a rhetoric or program of revolutionary politics'.

This is an interesting statement if looked at in the South African context. We could ask ourselves whether documentary 'struggle' photographs were more concerned with revolution or moralism. Documentary photography is often criticised as being 'victim' photography. In 'struggle' photography we see an interesting dualism: the 'victim' (poor,

oppressed, disempowered) who is also an active participant in creating change and causing revolt, and so is simultaneously a victor (empowered, revolutionary, hero).

In spite of (or perhaps because of) its liberal agenda, documentary photography continues into the 21st century. Rosler (1989: 307) suggests that:

> Liberalism may have been routed, but its cultural expressions still survive. This mainstream documentary has achieved legitimacy and has a decidedly ritualistic character. The liberal documentary assuages any stirrings of conscience in its viewers the way scratching relieves an itch and simultaneously reassures them about their relative wealth and social position; especially the latter ...

Rosler (1989: 307) suggests that social documentary photography has also been used to veil a whole raft of other agendas. She says, 'The exposé, the compassion and outrage, of documentary fuelled by the dedication to reform has shaded over into combinations of exoticism, tourism, voyeurism, psychologism and metaphysics, trophy hunting – and careerism'. The documentary photograph usually tries to do more than simply give information. It attempts to persuade and convince and in this sense its aims sometimes come dangerously close to propaganda.

There has been a definite shift between an apartheid practice which was critical of the politics of the Nationalist government, but little else, and a post-apartheid practice which is critical of modernity, self-critical, critical of empiricism, 'truth', fixed identity, narrative, interpretation, logic, authenticity, originality...et cetra. In post-apartheid (Postmodern) South African photography there is a radical questioning of many Modernist documentary models which were prevalent during apartheid, for example, the radical questioning of polar / binary opposites (which question concepts of gender, identity and authorship) and a questioning of history. Single narratives are rejected in favour of multiple narratives, amongst other forms of radical questioning.

Post-apartheid photography is essentially Postmodern photography and assumes many forms, including: the copy, plagiarism, appropriation, the inauthentic, parody, pastiche, the manipulated, frivolous, the decorative, cynical, ironic, humorous, tongue in cheek, the

ambiguous, eclectic, intertextual, hybrid, plural, staged, constructed, deconstructed, nostalgic, historicist, deliberately banal, discursive, contradictory, playful, decentred, readerly, schizophrenic and epistemological.[5]

The first chapter of this thesis concentrates on the development of photography during Apartheid[6]. For this research, the term 'apartheid South Africa' is applied to the period between 1948 when the Nationalist Party (NP) came to power, and 1990 when the African National Congress[7] was unbanned and Nelson Mandela was released. The dominant characteristics of photography during the apartheid era will be analysed, in order to facilitate a comparison between these photographic conventions and the critical practice of post-apartheid photography.

Although many genres and categories of photography were practised in South Africa during the apartheid era (for example, aerial, industrial, commercial, underwater, wildlife, portrait, travel) I will concentrate on documentary and art photography, as these genres have significance in a fine arts context.[8] In them one sees the radical changes effected in post-apartheid South Africa, but the demise of apartheid had few repercussions on the purely functional genres mentioned above.

I will launch my discussion of apartheid photography with an investigation of the development of art photography during these times. I will then discuss documentary photography in relation to its Modernist / colonialist roots in 19th and early 20th century

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[5] With such wide-ranging exploration Postmodernism has opened itself to the accusation by some critics that it simply avoids commitment to rigorous argument.

[6] 'Apartheid: literally "separateness, distinctness"; "racial" separation at all levels. Official government policy since 1948' (Oakes 1992:514).

[7] The African National Congress (ANC) is the 'oldest surviving political organisation in South Africa. It was founded in 1912 as the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) and renamed in 1923. Initially a moderate, even conservative organisation, it opted for an armed struggle against the NP regime after being banned in 1960' (Oakes 1992: 514). In 1994, after democratic elections, the ANC was voted into government.

[8] In South Africa documentary photographers were given exposure in galleries and in art literature and they achieved international recognition as artists.

South Africa, as this practice was, to a large degree, informed by colonial and ethnographic photography of the 19th century. The aim of colonial / ethnographic photography was often to record, document and reveal aspects of colonised land, people and cultures for consumption by the coloniser. As such, these images were informed by specific ideological intent. The cataloguing and recording of the colonial enterprise was greatly helped along by the advent of photography, which occurred in the 19th century. Photography was seen as a medium that could be utterly truthful and objective in a way that painting or drawing (always to some degree an interpretative act) could not be. Photography in the 19th century thus became allied to science. Its ability to show the truth was unquestioned, and it was considered empirical evidence.

Riding on the back of these notions of 'truth' in photography, social documentary emerges in 20th century South Africa. Inextricable with colonialism is the Modernist philosophical notion that 'truth' exists; it is just a matter of exposing it. The need to 'document' was partly motivated by political conscience, but also by a Modernist (colonialist) faith in scientific objectivity.

In South Africa during the 20th century, art and politics were inextricably linked. The policies of apartheid tainted all forms of cultural practice in direct and indirect ways. It is for this reason that the development of a documentary tradition in apartheid South Africa is placed in a brief socio-historical context. South African social documentary has largely been connected to the struggle against apartheid. The developmental history provided in Chapter One attempts to deconstruct the documentary imperative of the apartheid years. I provide a short, truncated summary of political background, as a comprehensive history of apartheid repression is beyond the scope of this research.

Before going on to discuss the contents of Chapter Two it is perhaps important to try and understand where apartheid ends and where post-apartheid begins. Bester and Pierre (1998: 14) sum up this debate:

> Which ... historic events heralded the post-apartheid nation, is still being debated today. Ideological arguments for and against the narrative 'origins' of the post-apartheid nation are rejected; some for failing to consider the extent to which the social articulations of apartheid literally began to tumble from 1990, others for being premature, too early to reflect on anything substantially new and different. Against both these protestations, some argue that South Africa is still too tied to apartheid to be 'post' anything and that is a tie that will bind for generations to come.
>
> What this last position points to is the extent to which the 'post' in post-apartheid too often assumes a clear spatio-temporal division between apartheid and what has followed. Rather than conceptualising 'post-apartheid' as a temporal moment, it is useful to consider this notion as a series of intersecting spaces that are fractured and disjunctive as much as cohesive and connected. In this space of contesting too-earliness and too-lateness, it cannot be denied that South Africa is currently involved in a process of democratisation that has signified many profound changes to the nation.

As this comment indicates, there is no real clarity as to whether we have truly emerged from an apartheid situation or not, although a government of majority rule is now in place and apartheid legislation no longer defines social existence. Suffice it to say that the last decade saw major changes, including many in photography. I will, therefore, refer to this era as a post-apartheid era, bearing in mind the reservations articulated by Bester and Pierre.

In Chapter Two I discuss the emergence of a new criticality in South African photography. It is clear that radical changes have taken place during the post-apartheid era in South African photography. Some of these are caught up in the socio-political changes which occurred, while others are connected to the emergence of a critical Postmodernism: post-apartheid practice is essentially a Postmodernist practice. Where photography of the apartheid years was critical of the government, post-apartheid photography questions *all* perception, *all* constructs, *all* identities. Everything is regarded as fragmentary, in the process of invention, chimerical, illusory, temporary.

What has happened to confer on photography the high status it currently enjoys in South African visual culture? Is it about reconnecting with a contemporary international art

world through the two biennials and South African shows abroad?[9] Or is it associated with the 'crises' in documentary photography, in the post-apartheid and post-elections period? What has this meant for the ways that we have understood photography or the world? In this thesis I explore the forces that brought about this shift, and what has happened as a result, and then I discuss the complex diversity of practice.

In my discussion I cite examples of new critical strategies in photography from the post-apartheid era. These examples are explored in order to prove a shift from an overt political practice in pre-apartheid (colonialist-Modernist) and apartheid photography (Modernist) to a new, perhaps more subtle, criticality in post-apartheid photography (Postmodern).

The 1990s was a decade in which South African photographers were able to explore the new areas of liberated creativity that Albie Sachs hoped for, when in 'Preparing Ourselves for Freedom' (Sachs 1990: 10) he wrote:

> We all know where South Africa is, but we do not yet know what it is. Ours is the privileged generation that will make that discovery, if the apertures of our eyes are wide enough.

[9] For example, *Art from South Africa* at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford in 1990, *SITE* at Santa Fe in the USA in 1994, and South African involvement in the Havana Biennial, Venice Biennial 1993, 1995, Mali Biennial, and Dakar Biennial etc.) and two international Biennials locally (Johannesburg Biennials of 1995 and 1997).

CHAPTER 1:

PHOTOGRAPHY IN APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

Most of this discussion on the photography of the apartheid era will be devoted to the documentary genre, which was the dominant photographic practice at the time.[1] However, before commencing a detailed discussion of documentary photography, I will briefly discuss the art photography of apartheid South Africa, and its development and conventions. Although art photography was a marginal area which attracted only a few artists, it is important to consider this art form as it plays a major role in post-apartheid photography, which is discussed in the next chapter.

The Development of Art Photography

'Art' photography can be defined as photography that is intended as art and is created for exhibition and display in a gallery context[2]. In apartheid era art photography (of the 70s and 80s[3]) the emphasis is on formal innovation, aesthetics and significance[4] and, since

[1] The reasons for the dominance of this genre will be given later in Chapter One.

[2] Art photography should not be confused with salon photography, which was affiliated to the Royal Photographic Society. This society, along with the American Photographic Salon, organised their first exhibition in Cape Town in 1906. These photographers considered themselves to be craftspeople or serious hobbyists. They continued to meet and exhibit (locally and internationally, in spite of the cultural boycott) throughout the apartheid era and are still active today. The salons have their roots in the pictorial movement (discussed below), which was affiliated to the Royal Photographic Society and the Linked Ring. In America the Photo Secession (headed by Stieglitz) resulted in the Modernists breaking away from the pictorialists and heading off on the Modernist art photography trajectory. The salon photographers (internationally and locally) stayed trapped in a conservative pictorialist idiom. They excluded themselves from fine art photography internationally. In South Africa the salons were racially segregated. The Chinese Camera Club of South Africa, for example, met separately to the white salon, although sometimes members were invited to visit. In the late 1950s Peter Magubane established the Progressive Photographic Society, the first camera club that was racially mixed and the only forum for black photographers (Grundlingh 1999: 244).

[3] Modernist art photography was only really practised in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s. Up until then art photography was practised in the salon context and followed the outdated style of pictorialism. Geographic and international isolation (due to the cultural boycott and sanctions) meant that international photographic exhibitions and publications did not come to South Africa. As a result Modernist art photography was slow to take hold in South Africa.

[4] The imbuing of the everyday or commonplace with a sense of existential significance.

much of the impetus came from American art photography, it is useful to examine some issues and examples.

As art photography in apartheid South Africa was dependent on Modernist traditions,[5] a short summary of the main international Modernist trends is useful. Mainstream Modernist photography[6] anxiously sought approval as a medium suitable for the making of Modernist art, by rejecting the aesthetics of pictorialism.[7] By seeking appreciation for properties that were neither pictorial nor documentary, Modernist photography echoed the Modernist theoretical abhorrence of the literary, anecdotal or referential.

In America, Alfred Stieglitz (1864 – 1946) in the first two decades of the 20th century, followed by Edward Steichen (1879 – 1973) in the 1930s, promoted the idea of photography as a medium defined by its materials and technical advances.[8] Formal qualities were emphasised above all others, for example, photographic print quality,

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[5] This summary is of necessity very generalised and simplified. Characteristics, attitudes and theories that exerted a particular influence on South African art photography are focused upon.

[6] Modernist photography developed in two currents: American purism as exemplified by Alfred Steiglitz (1864 - 1946), and the European experimental Modernist avant-garde, as exemplified by Lazlo Maholy-Nagy (1895 - 1946). However, with the cultural dominance of America during this time European Modernist photography's importance was marginalized and American Purist Modernism's influence dominated.

[7] Modernists rejected the pictorial photographers' use of effects, manipulation, retouching and soft focus. Peter Henry Emerson (1856 – 1936) was the main figure in the pictorial photographic movement and he sought 'a new understanding of the photograph, based on its own terms of reference and its own possibilities as a medium. He thus discounted the continuing comparison with and dependency upon painting as the primary point of reference' (Clarke: 1997:51). Pictorial photography was established in Britain by the Linked Ring (founded in 1892) along with the Royal Photographic Society in reaction to what its members considered to be the insufficiency of good photographers of the time. The interests of this group were to raise the status of photography to art. In South Africa the influence of pictorialism, according to Grundlingh (1999: 244), resulted in the portrait being overshadowed and a trend towards 'photographing of landscapes and outdoor scenes'. Examples of pictorial photographers in South Africa are A.V.R. van Oudtshoorn (figure 1-2) in the 1920s who was interested in presenting the 'grandeur of the South African land and seascape'. Will Till (figure 3) in the thirties produced 'peaceful and serene landscapes, their mystic lighting effects and moods of nature' (Bensusan 1966: 96). 'After the War came Bensusan's bolder renderings (figure 4)...In the fifties the emphasis was on the documentary school and the Chinese group (Hoo Koo figure 5), whilst the sixties brought the contemporary work of K.J. Reinheimer and the "unorthodox" treatments of M. Feldman' (Bensusan 1966: 96).

[8] This affirms the Modernist sentiment of truth to the inherent properties of a particular medium. Thus the inherent properties of painting are flatness, colour, brush marks etc.

strength of image, quality of paper, tonal depth, quality of impression, framing, and an emphasis on the single print as autonomous artwork. American High Modernists of the 1940s and 1950s produced 'photographs about photography'. The characteristics unique to photography are asserted, for example, in the work of Ansel Adams (1902 – 84), Imogen Cunningham (1883 – 1976) and Edward Weston (1886 – 1953) and others associated with the group F64,[9] a league of photographers who believed in unmanipulated, sharply focused, deep-space negatives and high-contrast fine-grain prints.

Weston's *Dune, Oceano* (1936) (figure 6) is a representative example of the landscape photographs of the F64 group. Here we see a desert landscape that has been photographed with studious intensity. There are no signs of human activity in the pristine landscape, and the sand and dunes form abstracted patterns of line, light-dark contrast, tonality and texture. The attention to technical excellence and formal pictorial qualities are typical of Modernist art photography. Clarke (1997: 65) suggests that the image has 'parallels with American Indian sand painting and the action painting of Jackson Pollock'. In Modernist photographs like this there was an attempt to move the photograph beyond the mere recording of a physical object towards a sense of metaphysical and spiritual presence.

In *The Unmade Bed* (1957) (figure 7) one sees a bed, sheets, blankets and several hairpins. The interest in rendering the ordinary as significant (through the intense and detailed scrutiny of the scene) is typical of Modernist American art photography. The play of light on the textures and folds of the unmade bed makes it seem fragile and strange. In this image and the one by Weston, discussed above, there is a sense of the photograph as isolated from the world in terms of time and history. These photographs

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[9]The Americans Ansel Adams, Edward Weston and Willard van Dyke founded F64, a small group of art photographers, in 1932. It was named after the smallest aperture (F stop) on the camera, which gives the greatest depth of field. It was committed to 'pure' photography and promoted and developed the aesthetic ideas of Steiglitz. This group photographed mainly nudes and landscape and were committed to 'intense and detailed scrutiny of the world according to the highest principles of technical ability'(Clarke 1997: 174).

celebrate a unity of time and space without reference to the social or political. High Modernist autonomy from socio-political context is thus affirmed.

Modern art and artists rejected narrative (and therefore documentary), which was considered an inappropriate language for the formalist, abstract concerns of Modernism. Because art is inherently a visual medium, High Modernist artists suppressed the verbal in favour of the visual. The more Modernism concerned itself with its own inherent formal laws, the further it grew apart from realism. This concern with formalism led eventually to abstraction and non-representational forms of art.[10] The development of pure abstraction was problematic for photography because it is always to some degree caught up in reality, as the light reflected from real objects leaves its trace on the photographic plate. The aesthetics of Modernism placed photography in a precarious position. On the one hand it was calling for truth to the inherent characteristics of the medium, and on the other hand it was denouncing realism. If photography was to be true to its own formal laws it had to involve forms of realism. In the context of Modernism the realist and narrative quality of photography was a disadvantage, and as a result it struggled to gain recognition as an art form in its own right.

Parallel to, and continuous with formalist photography, runs another history of Modernist photography: the European photographic avant-garde, which remained for the most part, marginal to the mainstream Modernist photographic concern with formalism. Artists of the European avant-garde undermined, negated or reconstructed the conventions of photography. These experiments[11] negated or undermined the automatic association of

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[10] In 19th century salon painting narrative played a key role, but narrative was rejected in the early part of the 20th century because many narrative paintings promoted sentimentality, sentimental themes and circumstantial detail. Narrative painting is the antithesis of the Modernist interest in abstraction, which draws attention to the process, and language of painting. In the late 19th and in the 20th centuries the novel and then the cinema took over narrative from painting, leaving painters to scrutinise paintings' formal properties. It can be argued that cinema synthesised the functions of painting and theatre.

[11] Although there is much evidence to suggest that photomontage, composite imagery and photograms have existed from the beginning of photography (for example, Fox Talbot's experiments), technical innovations are usually credited to the avant-garde European modern photographers. This is possibly because they were the first to recognise these innovations as artworks rather than just as experiments. Although European Modernist photography was particularly concerned with formal experimentation, photographic products did not exclude representational, realist or narrative concerns. The camera and darkroom experiments of the

photography with realism. Although this branch of European Modernism did not exert much influence over Modernist art photography in South Africa, the European Modernist tradition, which emphasised the poetic, the experimental and the anarchic, has been influential in post-apartheid critical practise. I will therefore discuss this phenomenon briefly.

After World War One an iconoclastic avant-gardism came into existence, which radically questioned principles of photography. Artists from the 1920s onward understood that photography does not so much confirm our experience of the world as it actively constructs it. Some artists began to use photography with anarchic, oppositional and transgressive intent. These photographers were loosely grouped around the Dadaists, constructivist and productivist movements, for example Alexander Rodshenko and El Lizitsky in the USSR, Moholy-Nagy of the Bauhaus, and the Surrealist photographers, for example Man Ray. Most of these photographers were trained in painting and sculpture. People with a background exclusively in photography usually opted for 'pure' photography and regarded the experiments of these avant-garde artists with some disdain. As will be demonstrated later, the technical experimentation and radical playfulness of these European avant-garde artists' approach to photography exerted an influence on the development of a critical photographic practice in post-apartheid South African photography.

Art photography in apartheid South Africa, however, looked to the international Modernist art trends, particularly in America, for its sense of direction. There were only a few art photographers working in South Africa at this time: other photographers were involved in the documenting of the more pressing issues of the struggle against apartheid.

Dada and Surrealist photographers created a variety of new pictorial techniques such as photo collage, photomontage, photo sculpture, double exposure, negative printing, solarisation and photograms. Artists manipulated the photographic image by using text, scissors, darkroom techniques and chemistry, and they used poetic juxtapositions of unlikely objects and irrationalities of place and scale to create fictional scenes that often contained a narrative component, however bizarre. Dada and Surrealist photographers (such as Hannah Hoch and John Heartfield) undermined the 'realism' and 'objectivity' of photography. They were critical and inventive in their uses of photographs and tried to subvert widely held ideas on truth-value and the supposed autonomy of the photograph.

Apartheid era art photographers worked in an insular art world, and their products were mainly derivative of American 'purist' models. Geographic and international isolation meant that South African art photographers were alienated from their colleagues abroad and that any new trends or changes were slow to take root. In South African art photography we see a Modernist purism being practised as late as the 1980s. If one examines the few photographs that were on display at national art exhibitions during the apartheid era one notices that they are mostly formal studies in a purist Modernist tradition, for example, Amy Schoeman's *Dune* (1988), Gordon Bleach's *Floodlit Beach, Muizenberg* (1985) and Geoff Grundlingh's *Bed* (1978).

Schoeman's *Dune* (figure 8) is a photograph that in terms of subject and formal pictorial qualities is very similar to Weston's *Dune, Oceano* (1936) discussed earlier. There is the same attention to pristine natural environments. The rounded dome of the dune in Schoeman's photograph has the perfect balanced geometric quality associated with American Modernist art photography. The play of light, pattern, texture and contrast intimate something other than the dune's mere physical presence: the dune is transformed into something metaphysical or spiritually significant.

Bleach's *Floodlit Beach, Muizenberg* (figure 9) operates on a similar level and deals with the same subject as Weston's photograph. Many art photographers used elements such as water and sand as central metaphors in the Modernist vocabulary of the mystical. The photograph has an abstracted brooding quality that seems to make reference to abstract expressionist painter Mark Rothko's paintings. In formal terms the image is divided into three horizontal bands: the play of light on the tracks in the foreground leads the eye into the central areas of smooth tonal sea and dark low sky. In Bleach's image we see signs of human activity (the bulldozer tracks) but they have been mediated by a machine and therefore have a regular geometric patterned quality. There is a contrast between the ephemeral nature of the sand and the temporary but distinctive tracks on its surface. Bleach's image is clearly indebted to American purist Modernism in general and Weston's work in particular.

In Grundlingh's *Untitled* (ca.1978) (figure 10) we see only a slightly crumpled sheet with subtle tonal variation between the gentle folds. There is no reference to any world outside of this bed and no other elements to give it any context. The image is similar in form and concept to Cunningham's *The Unmade Bed*, except it is even sparser. Cunningham and Grundlingh's photographs are compelling in that we find ourselves wondering about what the importance of this particular bed is that it could warrant such detailed photographic attention. Grundlingh, like Cunningham, turns the banal into something significant by photographing the ordinary with technical excellence and focused intensity.

In the works discussed above I have demonstrated the indebtedness of the South African art photographic tradition during the apartheid era to American purist Modernist models, particularly in their insistence on formal qualities and technical perfection. It is important to note that there was little gallery exposure or literature on art photography in South Africa during this time. According to Kathleen Grundlingh (1999: 250) 'As late as the mid 1980's, photography was still not recognised as an art form', several decades after it had been acknowledged as an equal art medium in the USA and Europe. The lack of recognition by the wider art world, also accounts for the slow development of South African art photography during this time. Grundlingh (1999: 250) highlights the role played by the South African National Gallery and tertiary education institutions in elevating the status of photography: 'By the early 1980s most tertiary institutions had established photography courses which were taught on an equal footing alongside the disciplines of painting and sculpture'.

However, gaining access to such state-funded institutions was almost impossible if one was not white. Art and photography were not usually offered at 'black' universities. Thus the study of photography (and particularly art photography) was only available to middle-class whites. Although some black photographers were involved in press and documentary photography, no black photographers were involved in art photography. Art photography remained a genre that was practised largely by academic white photographers who emulated formulaic international art photographic trends.

Long after Postmodernism had transformed art making practices abroad, South Africa remained trapped in a Modernist idiom due to sanctions and isolation from the broader art community. The examples of apartheid era art photography above demonstrate Modernist photographic characteristics such as formalism, technical perfection, the autonomy of the artwork, truth to materials and an obsession with the perfect fine print. Like their American counterparts, South African Modernist photographers also demonstrate an involvement in elevating the ordinary to the significant and show an interest in the transcendental.

During the apartheid years some art photographers, such as Neville Dubow, began to use a critical paradigm that became familiar in post-apartheid Postmodern photography. However such signs of negotiating Postmodernism were unusual. In Dubow's *Nude Descending a Spiral Staircase* (1982) (figure 11) we see Postmodern self-reflexivity in a set of photographs that look at looking at art. This photograph makes reference to Marcel Duchamp's work *Nude Descending a Staircase No. 2* (1912) and is arranged compositionally in a way that quotes from the original. However in *Points of Connection 1, 2 and 3* (1989) (figure 12) by Dubow, it can be argued that the photographs are still largely Modernist in their insistence on formal qualities such as composition, lighting, tone, geometry, line and form. These images are imbued with a Modernist sense of the significance of the ordinary. The photographs reveal the same formalist abstractionist interests of the Modernist photographers. Photographs such as these reveal Modernist conventions rather than a critical Postmodernism.

Dubow's photographs taken in Israel, the USA and Paris, have a documentary quality that is reminiscent of Cartier Bresson or Walker Evans. Many are photographed outside or in public open spaces. However his art photographs, which were shot in South Africa, are set mainly indoors or in enclosed safe spaces. This is typical of the art photography practised during the apartheid years. There seems to have been reluctance generally among art photographers to engage critically and artistically with the messy reality of

South African existence. Instead we see a retreat into ivory tower aesthetics and formalist studies where social or political commentary is not a primary concern.

Documentary Photography

While art photography, practised exclusively by white, academically trained photographers, pursued the formalist aesthetics of advanced Modernism, a concurrent branch of photographic practice evolved in South Africa. Arguably, in contrast to art photography, documentary photography was – more than any other visual media – immersed in the socio-political realities of apartheid South Africa.

It can be argued that the middle-class, liberal roots of documentary photography lie in 19th century photographic practice. South African documentary photography has its origins in the conventions of anthropological and ethnographic photography of the 19th century. I will, therefore, briefly discuss the colonial foundations of documentary photography because the conventions of ethnographic and anthropological photography (and its claim to objectivity and scientific documentation) continued to influence later documentary photography. The discussion of its development will be limited, as the scope of this thesis does not allow an in-depth discussion of this rich and complex topic.

Colonial Foundations of South African Documentary Photography

During the 18th century, as technology and science advanced, so too did European exploration of the world. By the beginning of the colonialist / Modernist era, exploration had led to colonisation and exploitation. Mapping, recording and documenting became a key to new riches and power. There is, however, more to this exercise of recording, cataloguing, collecting, classifying and revealing the world than meets the eye: in many ways it was an attempt to order, to know and therefore to control the world and the colonial 'other'.

A brief analysis of the 19th century reveals that its faith in photography as an objective recorder of 'facts' is a product of positivism. Positivism was a philosophical system that based its knowledge on perception and laid its faith in observation, logic and empirical evidence. This in turn led to the Victorian desire to obsessively record, document, collect, label, identify and catalogue. Positivism was a result of a belief in modernity and progress, which was brought about in the 18th and 19th century by an intricate set of developments, including the rise of the machine and the subsequent industrial revolution, which resulted in large scale urbanisation, the spread of transport networks and the emergence of new social structures. In Europe many of these changes were precipitated by Imperialism, which brought with it raw materials and cheap labour. According to Michael D' Arcy (1995:100), 'The discursive formations and power apparatuses of Western modernity are inextricably and problematically linked to the history of imperialism.' In the light of the work of cultural critics such as Spivak, Said and Bhabha 'one must read the phenomenon of modern Western culture together in some way with the history of imperialism' (1995: 100).[12]

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[12] Roland Barthes (1990: 93) has highlighted the notion that the 19th century gave us both history and photography and foregrounds the ways in which photography has been used in the construction of history. John Tagg (1988: 65) observes 'Photographs are never "evidence" of history; they are themselves historical.' Photography upon its advent in 1839 was hailed as a truly modern medium. It was born of science, a product of the industrial revolution. In its use of a machine it was perceived as being truthful, objective and scientific. As such it was suitable for what the 19th century historian believed to be the objective act of recording history. E. H. Carr (1964) has subsequently observed that history is a construct consequent upon the questions asked by the historian and thereby suggests that history is as much about the historians and their time as the history under investigation. It is in the light of this thinking that we must reinvestigate colonial history (and its visual artefacts). The writing of a modernist / colonialist history involved the creation of a single, linear narrative in which the focus was on the 'object' of the narrative, not on the narrator or act of narration. In a current investigation of history we are interested in discovering who narrated a particular history and why it was narrated as such. South African history in the 19th and early 20th centuries was written by colonialist historians who did not necessarily have training in the analysis of the visual image, yet nevertheless had a tendency to use photographs to illustrate what they had written and to provide evidence for their accounts. Hayes, Silvester and Hartman (1998:7) propose that 'history's disciplinary leanings towards positivism and empiricism have encouraged the view that photographs represent *prima facie* evidence only: what is in the picture is seen as a direct and true rendering of reality as it existed when the camera shutter was operated'.

Hayes, Silvester and Hartman (1988: 5) suggest that:

> Photography is embedded in the late 19th century when optical empiricism was considered equally feasible as other forms of empiricism. The camera formed part of the 'truth apparatus' (Sekula 1989: 352-353) being forged by science and police work in modernising states in Western Europe. In colonial contexts anthropometric photography offered a new form of imperial knowledge about colonial peoples that signalled a shift from mapping sites to mapping visuality (Banta and Hinsley 1986).

Allan Sekula (1984:79) notes that in the 19th century:

> With the rise of the modern social sciences, a regularised flow of symbolic and material power is engineered between fully-human subject and less-than-fully-human object along vectors of race, sex and class. The social scientific appropriation of photography led to a genre I would call *instrumental realism*, representational projects devoted to new techniques of social diagnosis and control, to the systematic naming, categorisation, and isolation of otherness thought to be determined by biology and manifested through the 'language' of the body itself. Early anthropological, criminological and psychiatric photography...constitute ambitious attempts to link optical empiricism with abstract, statistical truth, to move from the specificity of the body to abstract, mathematical laws of human nature. Thus photography was hitched to the locomotive of positivism.

John Tagg (1988) has proposed that colonial photography was an extension of the photography of the modern state (surveillance, identification, criminalisation and patholigisation), which was relocated to a colonial environment. Photography in the colonies found itself in the service of colonial enterprises such as anthropology. Anthropology became established as a social science in the mid 19th century at the same time as photography developed and anthropologists came to use the camera to document and collect information. Anthropologists of the 19th century felt that the medium of photography was suitable for the gathering of scientific and social data as it was free of the artistry of drawing or painting (which were viewed as interpretative acts). Photography was seen as privileged factual, unquestioned and empirical evidence of the real. In the 19th century biological anthropology involved the study of people as biological specimens (its influences being phrenology, anthropometry and craniology), which allowed for the photographing and measuring of noses, skulls, genitalia, shape of mouths, buttocks, breasts et cetera.

> In the West photographs were used to illustrate the physiognomic and phrenological theories which held that the shape and size of the human body, particularly the human head, served as an indicator of inner characteristics which helped to define the defiant and pathological other (Harris 1998: 20).

This enabled colonisers and anthropologists to arrive at various categories and conclusions regarding 'body type' and 'racial type'. Most anthropometric photography demanded that the sitters conform to specific anthropometric poses (such as frontal and profile), as drawn up by people such as Thomas Huxley (president of the Ethnological Society). These poses usually insisted that the sitter be photographed naked (stripped of dignity) against a plain background (removed from their physical context) and against some sort of measuring scale (for the purposes of comparison). The subjects were then measured, probed, scanned, magnified, reduced, isolated and debased in these encounters. Examples of this type of photography include those examples taken of //Kabbo and !Gubbu by Lawrence and Selkirk at the Breakwater prison in Cape Town in 1870 – 71 (figure 13).

Sekula suggests that during the 19th century 'a fundamental tension developed between the uses of photography that fulfil a bourgeois conception of *self* and uses that seek to establish and delimit the terrain of the *other*' (1984: 79). The images generated by Imperialists were not for the consumption of the sitter (the colonised 'other') but rather for an audience in Europe, and they were created with a specific ideological intent. These colonialist projects often set out to 'prove' racist theories held by the Imperialists. James Ryan (1997) proposes that photography was used not only to show off the greatness of empire but also for the purposes of incorporation and marginalisation. Expedition, anthropological and ethnographic photography were used to present remote perspectives and exotic people to the colonisers through books and at shows and exhibitions (figure 14). Photography enabled the urban people of Europe to look at the 'other' without the 'other' being able to return the gaze. Likewise, as will be discussed later, South African social documentary photography allowed for the white liberal middle classes internationally and locally to see the lives of the 'other' without being seen themselves.

An early example of this kind of photography was a photograph taken in 1845 by Thiesson. According to Bensusan (1966: 9) this is the earliest known picture taken in Southern Africa that is still in existence. It is called *Native Woman of Sofala* –

Moçambique[13] (figure 15). In this work an anonymous and partially naked black woman sits uncomfortably in side view in a chair. Although this photograph shares some of the conventions of portraiture, this picture was clearly not intended to be a portrait. The woman is unidentified and has no eye contact or communication with the viewer. She has been constructed to be looked at and not to return the gaze. This way of photographing is indicative of thousands of photographs that were to be taken in Africa over the next hundred years by colonists. Harris (1998:21) contends that:

> The photograph offered the coloniser more than the opportunity to gaze *en masse*. It was a tool in the categorisation and representation of the colonised 'other' as savage, and whether noble or not, as barbarian. Photography thus helped enable the metropolitan masses and settlers and expatriates in the colonies to look down on the 'inferior' colonial 'other'. This other was not only properly the subject of colonial power and control but also, in terms of social Darwinist theories of natural history, a negative measure of human advance. In the interaction between photographic images and colonial discourse, it was the colonised subject's 'body ... rather than speech, law or history' that was the 'essential' defining characteristic of 'Primitive' peoples. They live, in this view not in a body politic ... nor in a meaningful historical time (Spurr 1993: 22). The body, particularly when depicted in and part of nature, is 'opposed to culture and civilisation' (Spurr 1993: 156). Thus 'black' became natural, unclothed and savage (or barbaric), while 'white' was cultured, clothed and civilised. Furthermore when represented as a 'child of nature', the colonial 'other' occupies a particular locus on the pseudo biological social Darwinist continuum of human evolutionary development. 'Advanced' people, by definition no longer part of nature, have a natural, inherited right to the earth, and all that is on it, including the less advanced peoples (Spurr 1993: 156). In this context, colonial photographs become a means through which colonial conquest could be represented as a natural, even desirable development.

Photographs were thus used to 'prove' the inferiority of the 'other' and therefore to justify the project of colonialism and its dominance and oppression. Black people were relegated to physical, cultural and intellectual inferiority and the camera was the tool that provided 'evidence'.

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[13] Bensusan (1966: 9) describes the sitter as having a 'placid "Mona – Lisa" smile on her countenance'. Bensusan brings with him a Western art historical framework when reading this image and tries to force it into that paradigm. I would question whether the expression is a smile at all. It looks more like an expression of sadness.

It can be argued that the colonial camera, through the dominant genres[14] of anthropological and ethnographic photography, was partially responsible for the framing of the colonial 'other'. I shall therefore briefly look at some examples of these genres, in order to demonstrate the colonial origins of documentary photography in South Africa.

In Southern Africa in the 1860s, James Chapman, an explorer and photographer, photographed both people and landscape. His travel companion on his Namibian expedition during the 1860s, Thomas Baines, notes in his diary (Bensusan 1966: 25,26) the difficulties associated with procuring an image, both on a technical level (because of heat, dust and the lack of clean water) and also because of the reaction of the local people. He notes that on seeing the double-barrelled stereo camera, local people ran away. Clearly the similarity between the camera and the gun was not lost on these people. Landau (1996:133) comments:

> Much has been made of indigenes' fear of photos 'stealing their soul', but people such as 'bushmen' were likely to have recognised metal devices as essentially aggressive (Sontag 1977: 4, 7); again, in the colonial world the same people who would be shot with cameras were shot with rifles.

Landau (1996: 132) observes a change from the earliest colonial photography to the photography that was practised between 1885 to 1930 during an era he identifies as 'New Imperialism'. Chapman's early photographs taken in the 1860s in Damaraland[15] show a 'fluidity of identity and dress' (Hayes, Silvester and Hartman 1998: 5), whereas in later photographs there appears to be a tendency to try to fix identity, which is probably due to the influence of anthropometric and ethnographic photography. This attempt at 'fixing identity' formed part of the documentary tradition of photography during the apartheid era, as will be discussed later.

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[14] Other forms of photography were practised simultaneously; for example, studio and amateur photography, but they have had little effect on the documentary and art traditions of South African photography and therefore fall outside the scope of this thesis.

[15] Photographs of Chapman's Zambezi expedition (figure 16) were published in 1865 and were described as 'Stereo-photographs of the Great Victoria Falls, African Natives, Animals and Scenery taken by Mr. Chapman during his journey to the Falls' (Bull and Denefield 1970: 95). Here the colonial other is positioned alongside natural scenery and wildlife.

The Victorian and Edwardian eras were times of intense change and this manifested itself in a desire to preserve and document things as they were. Landau (1996: 131) sees this phenomenon as having art historical roots and notes, 'picturing the world was part of the Victorian drive to classify the world. The dawn of accessible, dry-plate photography only expanded the project.' An effort was made to capture things before they were lost altogether. Wilhelm Bleek 'thought it advisable to photograph several ... [bushmen] as the race is dying out' (in Godby: 118).[16]

In Alfred Duggan-Cronin's (1897 - 1954) *The Bantu Tribes of Southern Africa*[17] his idea was to document these tribes before their cultures died out. The irony here is that the reason the customs, dress and culture were being eroded was precisely due to colonisation and yet the colonisers were trying to record everything as it was, before it changed. They wanted to somehow freeze it in time and to keep it idyllic, rural and pastoral. Duggan-Cronin wrote: 'Year by year the Natives were becoming more and more civilised and any delay in the work could mean that valuable record of the Natives in their primitive state would be lost for all time' (Bensusan 1966: 104).

The style of Duggan-Cronin's (figures 17-20) photography is very seductive. The photographs have been printed using the photogravure process in which photographs are reproduced using a plate. This plate leaves an impression on the paper, thus making the photograph seem more like an etching and therefore a work of art. The photographs have

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[16] The idea that the bushmen were 'dying out' was worked neatly into 19th-century Darwinist notions of 'survival of the fittest'. It seemed somehow fitting that races believed to be inferior should become extinct (in spite of the fact that they were being shot and starved to death) because it confirmed the colonialists' beliefs in their own superiority.

[17] This was an ongoing project that took place between his arrival in South Africa in 1897 and the Second World War. During this time he produced several volumes, including *The Bavenda*, *The Suto – Chana Tribes* and *The Bushmen*.

a sepia quality, which adds a feeling of nostalgia. The tonal contrasts are gentle, giving the photographs a romanticised pictorial feeling. [18]

In colonial photography it is particularly important to note not only that which is present (what we can see) but also that which is absent (what is not immediately visible and what has been left out of the photographic frame)[19]. Most of Duggan-Cronin's photographs are of women. This is not only due to the fact that these books were intended mostly for consumption by a white male, possibly voyeuristic, colonial audience, but also because of the fact that there were few males in the rural areas as many of them were away (working on mines and in urbanised centres). Thus when we do see men they are usually the chief, uninitiated boys, or old men. When men were available for photographing (home from the mines, etc.) they were often urbanised and were unwilling to be represented in tribal dress[20]. To present the men in Western clothing would have destroyed the 'primitive' idyll that Cronin was trying to present[21]. There are several recorded instances where Cronin manipulated his subjects in order to render them more exotic, for example, he

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[18] The edenic quality of the style of the photographs is mirrored in their subject. Duggan-Cronin aims to show the 'typical' industries and customs. He shows his subjects mainly sitting or lying about and when he does show labour (like carrying water) he dismisses it by writing it out in the caption. Duggan-Cronin shows women filling the granaries or grinding the corn (the fruit of labour) but not the labour of planting or hoeing. In not showing labour he confirms colonial myths about the black people's relationship with nature: that nature provides (for the 'children of nature') and the minimum amount of labour is necessary. This relieves the conscience of the colonial viewer and confirms that the 'others' have all they need. 'The visual images reinforce the notion of idyllic rural homelands and timeless tradition. In such an ethnography Africans are given culture but not history' (Silvester, Hayes and Hartman 1998: 17).

In contrast to the photographs of Duggan-Cronin many photographers in the social documentary photography of apartheid South Africa do photo essays on labour, which I will discuss later.

[19] The issue of presence / absence, particularly the absence / presence of the photographer, is of much importance to my practical work, in which I explore deliberate attempts by the photographer to efface traces of his presence from the frame.

[20] Bensusan (1966: 103) outlines such an encounter: 'On another occasion Cronin was experiencing difficulty in persuading a Chief to wear a blanket for his portrait. The chief protested and gave as his reason the fact that he was a Christian and had only one wife. Cronin's persuasive argument was that he too was a Christian but did not even have a wife at all, and this seemed to meet the situation for the chief relented with the words that "You are the first man to take my photograph and you will be the last" '.

[21] The Bulawayo *Sunday Chronicle*, 5 August, 1934 notes that Duggan-Cronin 'had succeeded in going among the natives and persuading them to search out all their *old* equipment and, in *natural settings*, to pose before the camera, devoid of that self-consciousness which most mars attempts at native photography' (Bensusan 1966: 103) (my italics).

insisted a reluctant sitter wear a leopard skin. Many of the photographs have a set up quality as though they have been staged. We can notice a similar use of costume in several of the books of different tribes and the same contrived poses. Although the pretence of ethnographic and anthropological photography was that they documented things as they were, Duggan-Cronin clearly staged and costumed his figures.[22]

Colonialist photography of this sort was practised until half way through the 20th century, as the example of Duggan-Cronin shows. In many ways it feeds directly into South African documentary traditions. The need to 'document' in South Africa was motivated partially by political conscience and photographic fashion, but also by a modernist (colonialist) faith in 'scientific' objectivity.

There are many points of similarity between 19th-century colonialist photography and documentary photography. Both genres rely on the notion of 'truth'/'proof'. They produce 'evidence' and claim to show things 'as they really are'. They both depend on the Modernist notion that a 'truth' exists out there somewhere and it's simply a matter of finding it, capturing it, and displaying it as evidence. These types of photographs have specificity and 'authenticity' which allows them to become hijacked by history and used to illustrate it and freeze the moment, thereby making icons of history. This in turn holds the potential to turn situations and people into stereotypes, and the images also hold the potential to be used as propaganda.

Both colonial and documentary photographs were disseminated in similar ways: in colonial times through books, exhibitions, museums, magic lantern slide shows, scientific

[22] Another instance of Duggan-Cronin's manipulation of his subjects can be seen in the way he photographed women. In several photographs in his books we see half naked married women (figure 20). In many African cultures married women cover their breasts. It appears Duggan-Cronin insensitively requested that his subjects disrobe to the waist, which goes against the norms of their cultures. Harris (1998: 22) suggests that 'implicit in the discursive practices of photography is the question of power: who, in the taking of the photograph has the power: the photographer or the photographed?' Here the power dynamic is complex and unbalanced: a white clothed male with the power and authority to manipulate, photographing disempowered black women. These photographs are more of a document of powerful authority than a document of the tribes of Southern Africa. The colonial representation of the colonised tells us more about the coloniser than the colonised: as in most anthropological photography 'The eyes that look back at us' (Banta and Hinsley 1986: 127) are always our own.

papers, stereo carte vista, postcards and so on. In documentary photography photographs were distributed by books, exhibitions (both in community and museum contexts), slide shows, academic papers (in the fields of politics, economics, anthropology), pamphlets etc. The mass media added magazines and newspapers but in many ways the visual codes remained the same.

Both documentary and colonial photographs were for the consumption of some other group than the subject, usually for viewing by a white middle-class audience. However, in colonial photography these images were made to reveal the hidden world of the 'other' to the audiences back home, where they were meant to titillate and amuse rather than stimulate a middle-class compassion. In some cases colonial photographs were used to elicit sympathy for the 'uncivilised', 'unchristianised' 'other' and this sympathy could translate into philanthropic support for the colonial enterprise. Documentary photographs taken later in South Africa were used to encourage compassion and therefore support (both financial and ideological) for political reform. The modern liberal middle-class audience behaves in much the same way as the colonial audience. Both are essentially greedy, lazy viewers (in Barthesian terms they 'consume' the texts rather than 'produce' them) who feel that they can 'know' or understand something about the subject by simply seeing it. These two genres also cater for the voyeuristic needs of their audience: to 'experience' someone else's pain, anguish, physical presence or similar things, without being seen oneself or being there oneself. They both have the potential to create an emotive excitement and they both generate a desire to see more.

The photographers of colonial photography were almost always white, middle-class men who went about photographing a usually black subject. In the social documentary photography of the apartheid years there were a number of black photographers, but on the whole the white photographers outnumbered black photographers. In the case of white photographers photographing the 'other' (in both colonial and documentary photography) the power relations were unbalanced and strained. The photographers in both these situations *seem* to hold the power to be able to 'help' the subject. In both cases

the subject is usually photographed without permission and is often unable to position himself or herself for the camera. The photographers of both genres are mythologised as brave heroes who went off into situations of danger (colonials into unexplored territories and documentary photographers into politically volatile situations) in order to bring back the 'truth'. However, in both cases the photographer is absent: all his traces have been erased and the photographs are presented as if one was looking through an unmediated 'window on the world'. In both cases the subjects are usually victims. In colonial photography the subjects are victims of nature, or victims of circumstance, victims of their own 'base natures'. In documentary photography the subjects are victims of an unjust political, social and economic system.

Both these genres use systems of categorisation, order and description in the presentation of the images. Both systems rely on a strong relationship between text and image. They generally do not just have titles (in comparison to art photography for example) but rely on longer captions to explain and ground the image.

Solomon-Godeau (1991) proposes that in the 19th century all photography was, in a sense, 'documentary'. 'Some nineteenth-century photographers had regarded their work as "documents", but many more were indeed innocent of the fact that they were documentary photographers' (Wells 1997: 63). Thus although South Africa in the 19th century saw proto-documentarians such as Chapman and Duggan-Cronin, their photographs aimed to be documents rather than documentary. Clarke (1997: 146) suggests that 'as documents such images are windows into a world otherwise lost and to that extent are significantly and appropriately *documentary* photography' (Clarke's emphasis). Many photographs are in this sense documentary, but as Wells (1997: 63) points out 'if most photographs are a *kind* of documentary how can we make distinctions between them? One answer to the question is to define documentary in terms of its connection with particular kinds of social investigation.' [23]

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[23] Karin Becker Orn (1980: 36) suggests that

> The cluster of characteristics defining the documentary style incorporates all aspects of the making and use of photographs. Although not rigid these characteristics serve as referents for comparing photographers' work within the documentary tradition – a tradition that includes aspects of

As demonstrated above, the middle-class conventions of documentary photography have their roots in the 19th-century uses of the photographic medium. Another aspect of the documentary convention – namely narrative – also has its roots in the 19th century.

By the time of the emergence of photography in the 19th-century, narrative in painting and literature had already had a long history. Photography infiltrates into 19th-century artistic conventions at a time when images were largely narrative. This explains why, in many instances, photography adopted a quasi-narrative structure. In 19th century salon painting narrative played a key role. Narrative painters invariably employed a 'window-onto-the-world' structure, with an accent on legibility, chronology and causality. Social documentary photography thus contains sequential, chronological and causal elements[24] similar to 19th-century realist modes of storytelling. Documentary photography, like its 19th-century forebears, is essentially a narrative genre. This is apparent in the nomenclature that surrounds it, for example 'photo essay', 'photo journalism' and 'photo story.' It proposes to reveal reality and therefore positions itself not as art (fiction) but truth (fact). Documentary photography has a capacity for narrative that is mostly a result of its supposed 'inherent realism' which served the essentially figurative interests of narration.

> journalism, art, education, sociology and history. Primarily documentary was thought of as having a goal beyond the production of a fine print. The photographer's goal was to bring to the attention of an audience the subject of his or her own work and in many cases to pave the way for social change.

Rosler suggests that there is a difference between social documentary and documentary photography:

> In England, where documentary practice (in both film and photography) had a strong public presence (and where documentary was named by John Grierson), with well-articulated theoretical ties to social-democratic politics, it is customary to distinguish *social documentary* from documentary per se (photos of ballerinas, an English student said contemptuously). The more general term denotes photographic practice having a variety of aesthetic claims but without involvement in exposé (Rosler 1989: 334).

[24] Similar to 19th-century narrative painting traditional documentary or press images tell stories in ways that are closed, fixed and structured. In the photo essay the story must be chronologically arranged. The 'natural' narrative and logical sequence of events should not be disturbed. The photographer has the option of selecting other moments in the narrative but the story itself should be chronologically arranged. In a photo story the text often dictates the structure of the sequence and it holds the photographs accountable.

In this discussion I have foregrounded some of the traditions associated with the genre and in the following section I will show how these documentary conventions are put into action in the development of the South African documentary tradition during the apartheid era.

The Development of Documentary Photography in South Africa

Throughout the 20th century the dominant photographic practice in South Africa was social documentary. In this section I will look at the development of the South African documentary tradition, concentrating on social documentary photography during the apartheid years.

As mentioned previously, social documentary can be regarded as an extension of the anthropological and ethnographic photography of the 19th century. Early photographic traditions in South Africa were particularly geared for colonial consumption and ethnographic study, and were informed by specific ideological intent. These traditions developed into social documentary photography, bringing some of their ideological biases with them.[25] In the above discussion I have demonstrated some of the points of similarity between 19th-century colonial photography and 20th-century documentary photography. In this section I will discuss the conventions of this practice in a South African context, and then the evolution of the South African social documentary tradition.

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[25] Rhoda Rosen in The Documentary Photographer and Social Responsibility (1992: 4) contends that

> Contemporary documentary photographers in South Africa, like colonial ethnographic photographers before them, often perpetuate two beliefs about the nature of photographs without question, or at least without resolving the questions. They hold, firstly, that a photograph can represent the subject with accuracy and dignity and secondly, that a photograph provides us with real knowledge about the people in the photograph. Some documentary photographers continue to perpetuate these beliefs despite the countless questions which have been raised, which suggest that a photograph is more an interpretation than a document or description.

Jane Taylor (1997: 6) asserts: 'South African photography has been marked by its content. We were living in extraordinary times, and the camera documented this: our monumental history.' In South Africa, documentary photography embodied the socio-political issues of a particular time (the apartheid era), having as its distinguishing feature the attempt to capture socio-political events repressed in the government-controlled media. Much documentary photography after the 1950s came to be associated in South Africa with the portrayal of the struggle against white domination, and I will refer to this genre as 'struggle' photography. 'Struggle' photography was itself not innocent of ideological bias since it aimed to provide 'authentic' documentation of South African life under apartheid, which is essentially a narrative objective. The dual concepts of truth and story telling may seem mutually exclusive, but in this context they are not. Magubane[26] (1986: unpaginated) says, 'Those who are engaged in the struggle for liberation depend on this truth and honesty for attaining their ideals. Whilst they tell their story on various platforms with different languages and ideologies, we tell it with photographs...'.

In documentary the issue of 'objectivity' and its imperative to tell the 'truth' gave the genre its particular ethos and distinctive character. This narrative imperative – the imperative to record, document, relate – was able to translate events into history. For example Sam Nzima's (1976) (figure 21) photograph of a student carrying Hector Petersen's fatally wounded body has become an icon of the narration of the history of this time.[27] As in the colonialist-modernist history which involved the creation of a single, linear narrative, documentary photography created and presupposed a similar linear reading of history. Photographs were the empirical 'evidence' of events that had occurred

[26] In Peter Magubane's book *Magubane's South Africa* (Magubane 1978: unpaginated) Andrew Young describes Magubane's photographs: 'He succeeded in photographing events as they occurred. His photographs are a clear documentation of the cruelties suffered by his people. In one sense, these photographs will help substantiate the need to continue the protest against apartheid in South Africa.'

[27] The 'struggle' photographs are in a sense an archive of collective stories that stood up in protest to the master narrative of apartheid's attempt to erase history. Images shape our understanding of historical narratives, for example, Sam Nzima's picture of Hector Petersen in Soweto shapes understanding of the events of 1976 and the struggle. Photographs such as these become icons of narration. We've seen enough pictures around that image for us to fill in the rest of the narrative and to adopt the image into own historical narratives. 'Struggle' photographs are exceptional in their ability to tell and remember but they are *a* point of view, and *a* way of telling and remembering.

and were caught up in presuppositions of external, verifiable truth. Documentary photography works with the objective that there is a single perspective: *one* narrative and *one* truth. The focus in documentary is on the 'object' of the narrative, not on the narrator or act of narration. The presence of the photographer as I / eye is neutralised and denied. This is in contrast to Postmodern practice, which I will discuss in the following chapter.

In South African documentary photography during the apartheid era conventions were established which were built around a modernist faith in the camera's ability to record the 'truth' objectively. It was believed that truth is *a priori*. It is simply a matter of uncovering it and bringing it back. This quest to discover the truth led to a desire to record and document events and situations in order to expose for the viewer the 'reality' of what was happening in South Africa during apartheid. This 'reality' was presented to someone other than those involved in the struggle. These images were often for the consumption of a liberal white middle class, and as such they were meant to elicit sympathy and galvanise the viewer into action in support of the oppressed. The subjects of social documentary photography were most often black people, and white people were only photographed in the context of support for the struggle against oppression or as perpetrators of oppression. In much of social documentary photography in apartheid South Africa there is an element of aggression, which is either implied or overt. The subjects are victims: something has been done to them and this can take the form of anything from poverty, inflicted by the socio-political situation, to violence, perpetrated by the apartheid government.

The images created by documentary photographers during this period (1948-1990) pretend to have few aesthetic aspirations and are ostensibly about getting a message across. The visual product of social documentary during the apartheid era is characterised by the use of black and white film, which was considered to be cooler (less emotional) and more objective than colour. It was also cheaper to use and thus more widely accessible to various economic groups. The photographs often have a high contrast quality. This was partly as a result of the harsh South African light, but also because many of these photographs were intended for publication (rather than display as fine

prints), and reproduction requires prints to have high contrasts. The photographs are often grainy as a result of using fast film, which is suitable for lower light conditions (indoors) and fast shutter speeds for capturing action outdoors. From the 1950s onwards (as technology allowed for cameras to become more portable and lightweight and therefore more suitable for the photographing of action), the square medium format was abandoned in favour of the rectangular 35mm small format camera. The above-mentioned qualities can be regarded as conventions characteristic of South African documentary photography.

A distinction needs to be made between two related genres – documentary and press photography. South African documentary photographers often revealed a more committed and sympathetic attitude towards the struggle than press photographers who were employed to record news as it happened. It is, however, not easy to categorise distinctions since many documentary photographers (particularly those involved in the struggle) also worked as press photographers for overseas press agencies or magazines.[28] The South African press, which was mostly government controlled, or under press restrictions by the apartheid government, had a particular set of conditions of access during times of strife. The foreign press were only present during times of unrest and only for short periods before moving on to other 'hot spots', which is one reason why local photographers were employed as stringers for agencies. Unlike the press, many documentary photographers spent time in particular areas and built up relationships with communities. When one sees documentary photographers' images of unrest, they usually reveal partiality in that they support the point of view of the oppressed.

In *Mourners clash with police during a wake at the home of three–year–old Mnita Ngubeni, who was shot in the head by police, Atteridgeville township, Pretoria, September 1985* (figure 22), it is clear from the angle of the photograph that the photographer, Gideon Mendel, is in the direct line of fire of the policeman who is aiming

[28] Magubane worked for many publications including *Drum* and he later became *Time*'s South African staff photographer. Cedric Nunn, Gideon Mendel, Guy Tillim and Paul Weinberg worked for international picture agencies such Agency France Press, Associated Press and Reuters.

his gun at the mourners in front of him. Here the photographer is physically and ideologically on the side of the oppressed. In contrast to this, press photographs of the time are often taken from the point of view of the oppressor. Press photographers had a limited amount of time for their assignments, had deadlines to meet, and had less time to build relationships with the photographic subjects. Because it was dangerous for photographers to stroll about taking photographs under potentially volatile conditions, press photographers often had to accept protection from the security forces and as a result their photographs seem to be taken from the viewpoint of those in power.

Weinberg (1989: 65) comments that:

> In these early days ...the presence of the international press was small. It was only when South Africa became 'a story' that any interest was shown. And it was only when it became a 'violent story' that a concerted interest was shown. It is for these reasons that the indigenous documentary movement has a depth to it that international photographers lack.

Press photography is often characterised by the use of long lenses. Press photographers are often physically further away from the 'action' than their photographs suggest. Many press images of unrest are clearly taken from a distance, as can be deduced from the very limited depth of field they exhibit – telephoto lenses tend to flatten out the background. Ironically long lenses are also those favoured by fashion photographers as they have a glamorising effect.[29] Press photographers of this period laid themselves open to the accusation of aesthetisising violence. The news photographers often had an interest in technical excellence and this sometimes tended to 'neutralise' the message of their stories. By contrast documentary 'struggle' photographers often used standard and even wide-angle lenses, which meant that they had to be physically very close to the events as they

[29] Telephoto lenses on a 35mm camera are those with a focal length longer than 50mm. According to Waller (2000: 83) the telephoto is ideal for portrait photography as 'The power of the lens allows the subject to be at a comfortable distance and the photographer can still achieve a tight close-up portrait.' The extremely reduced depth of field means that the focal range is limited so that the background is usually out of focus which means that distractions from the model are kept to a minimum. The telephoto also tends to flatten out features so that they do not stand out and this can have a glamorising effect.

were happening. This is evident in Julian Cobbing's photograph *Eastern Cape United Democratic Front leader Mathew Goniwe salutes a crowd at the funeral of youth activist Tamasanque Steven, Joza township, Grahamstown, 1986* (figure 23). Physical proximity to the scene demonstrated, in the apartheid era, political commitment to the oppressed. Despite claims to 'objectivity' the photographic narrative that unfolds in South African documentary photography conveys as much about the narrator as it does about the subject.

A further distinction between press and documentary photography was the use of colour. Documentary photographers favoured the seemingly objective, cool look of black and white whereas the press preferred the sensational effects of colour.

Press photographers usually worked under instructions from editors and in conjunction with journalists, and their function was to illustrate someone else's story. Documentary photographers mostly worked on their own initiative to create essays in visual form and usually wrote the words themselves. In newspapers the photograph is subservient to the written word.[30] Documentary photographers, on the other hand, prioritise their images

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[30] In the 20th century storytelling with a camera became a major form of reporting, in the social documentary genre and its sub-genre, the photo essay. The photo essay is found in newspapers, current affairs magazines, books, and community and gallery exhibitions. Its newsworthiness is a motivating issue and the subject matter of these photographs usually reflects social issues. In social documentary photography the link between text and image is particularly strong, the camera providing as much information as the written word. In the photo essay almost everything reported in words is also reported in pictures. It can be argued that in some ways pictures have a more powerful impact than words because one can scan a photograph without reading the text and still decipher a meaning. The written texts explain, describe, label, and speak for or to, the photographs. The photographs exemplify, clarify, ground and document the text. An extensive use of text amplifies and anchors meaning or questions meaning, and implicitly questions the Modernist art photography assumption of photographic autonomy and self-reflexiveness.

The combination of text and photograph creates a tension. A viewer who usually reads the image first looks to the text to add information to something the reader already knows. When photographs go public the result is an even more complex integration. Photographs are highly specific and one cannot escape the particularity of photograph. This specificity of photography is mostly a desirable characteristic but it also creates a problem: one cannot get away from the specificity. The text explains the photograph and reinforces this specificity further.

If photographs are used *with* words they intensify certainty or assertion. The documentary photograph gives credibility to the story. John Berger (1982: 92) comments:

over the written word. This foregrounding of the visual text is predicated on the idea that photographs can communicate more than words. Documentary photographers usually insist on some kind of control over the presentation and choice of their images. Press photographers' images are usually chosen by the picture editor and are therefore controlled by someone else's agenda. In press photography there is an emphasis on capturing the *one* photograph which tells the whole story, whereas in documentary photography there is an emphasis on narrative and therefore the sequence.

The way in which these images are displayed is also different. Documentary 'struggle' photographers often worked with the intention of publishing in books, pamphlets, or overseas magazines, or they intended to exhibit in museums and community contexts. Press photographers, on the other hand, aimed to sell their images to newspapers. Newspapers, as commercial enterprises, need to sell adverts in order to sell the news[31]. The layout of a newspaper with adverts alongside images of the struggle could have tended to neutralise these images. Walter Benjamin (1973) has commented that the newspaper format performed an ideological levelling by placing adverts, natural disasters, political and human-interest events all on the same footing. It can be argued that, by having to compete with one another for the reader's attention, these otherwise dissociated items become comparatively trivial. This gives rise to distraction as the primary condition of receptivity.

> In the relation between a photograph and words, the photograph begs for an interpretation, and the words usually supply it. The photograph, irrefutable as evidence but weak in meaning, is given meaning by the words. And the words, which by themselves remain at the level of generalisation, are given specific authenticity by the irrefutability of the photograph. Together the two then become very powerful; an open question appears to have been fully answered.

[31] Charlton Hayes (1941:178) writes that many newspapers

> ... became important business enterprises, shifting in character from 'journals of opinion' to 'journals of information' and relying for their profits less on subscriptions than on advertising which the advance of industrialization rendered ever more impelling and lucrative. The greater the circulation of a newspaper, the more advertising it could secure; and the more advertising it carried, the better it could afford to reduce its subscription price in order to obtain wider circulation.

I have outlined some of the conventions of documentary photography and some of the differences between documentary and press photography in South Africa, but it is necessary to stress again that there were many areas of overlap between these two genres. I will now discuss the development of South African documentary photography between 1948 and 1990. Before doing so, however, it is important to place the emergence of this tradition in a socio-political context, since culture and politics were so inextricably linked during the era of the struggle against apartheid. The focus will be on those socio-political events that exerted a direct influence on the development of a documentary tradition in South African photography.

In May 1948 the Herenigde (Reunited) National Party (HNP) emerged victorious from an election that defeated Jan Smuts's more liberal United Party (UP)[32]. The HNP immediately began to institute its programme of apartheid, which included the passing of laws such as the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1948)[33], an amendment to the Immorality Act (1950)[34], The Population Registration Act (1950)[35] and The Group Areas Act (1950)[36] amongst other forms of racist legislation. In spite of the passing of such laws the 1950s was a decade of relative freedoms (in comparison with the total clampdown of

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[32] Sylvester Stein (1984: 1444), editor of *Drum* in the late 1950s sums up the situation before apartheid:

> The Nationalists who got into power in 1948 put the screws on, harsher and harsher, and more categorically, but apartheid was always completely there before. Maybe one black in a million could get into a part of the country where he wasn't before but they didn't have jobs, they didn't own land, they didn't have the vote. They had a white man who could speak for you, that was entrenched in Parliament when South Africa first became united (1908). The British left a mess they had made here and it was a condition that you had to have three people speaking up for all the blacks. And then even that was taken away.

[33] This act made it illegal for marriage to take place between whites and blacks.

[34] This act made it illegal for sexual relations to take place between blacks and whites.

[35] The Population Registration Act was 'designed to provide definitions of "race" based on physical appearance as well as general acceptance and "repute". And once this had been established, it made provision for the carrying of identity cards in which the "race" of a person would be clearly marked' (Oakes 1992: 376).

[36] In terms of the Group Areas Act of 1950 areas were 'set aside for exclusive occupation by a particular "race" ' (Oakes 1992: 517).

the 60s, 70s and 80s). A youthful, vibrant urban black culture[37] emerged, particularly focused in and around Johannesburg, and specifically in the freehold suburbs,[38] for example Sophiatown. Sophiatown was a dynamic, racially mixed[39], bohemian and creative community that included among its residents writers, artists, politicians and musicians. This urban popular culture was particularly influenced by black American culture of this time, as is apparent in the cars, clothes, dance, gangs and jazz. In keeping with *Drum* magazine's popular image, the photographers were influenced by American magazine photography.

In Bob Gosani's *The Americans. Sophiatown, November 1964* (1964) (figure 24) this influence is clearly shown. In this photograph five members of the 'Americans' gang sit in a shiny long Cadillac, complete with chrome and fins, that crosses the square frame of the photo diagonally. They are all sharply dressed in bright white shirts (one with a bandanna worn as a cravat) and they all wear the fashionable Homburg gangster hats of the time. One of them is smoking a cigarette out the corner of his mouth in what looks like an imitation of a movie star. The scene in the stylish American car is in sharp contrast to the poverty of the township, which surrounds them. The buildings are constructed from corrugated iron and have been assembled in a haphazard fashion, the pavements are broken and the road untarred. In the background a small motley crowd of barefoot children and some adults are gathered and they are looking over at the car with curiosity. This photograph captures the spirit of the culture of the time: the American

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[37] Many of these people had been educated at mission schools. During the 1950s the Nationalist government claimed that in the mission schools 'dangerous, liberal ideas were being fed by outsiders into untrained minds' (Oakes 1992: 379). In order to gain control of black education government passed the Bantu Education Bill which forced black children into government schools, where they were given an inferior education to prepare them for a life of servitude. By the 1960s the destructive effects of this bill also contributed to the demise of the cultural blossoming that took place in the 1950s.

[38] The freehold suburbs were areas in which black people had been allowed to buy land. In Johannesburg this was centred around Sophiatown and the Western Areas.

[39]In the 1950s, although there was plenty of racism about, the extremely polarised racial situation of the later apartheid years had not yet come into being and in some social sectors and areas there was some degree of racial integration. Schadeberg (1987:160) says (somewhat naïvely) that in the fifties 'Blacks liked coloureds, coloureds liked whites and whites liked blacks'. It was later that the nationalists were to drive greater wedges between groups to divide and rule.

fashion, style, movie and gangland culture integrated into the poverty of an urbanised black African environment.

The American influence also impacted on photography. Documentary photography in the South Africa of the 1940s and 1950s grew greatly in popularity partly because of the influence of the international picture magazines such as *Life* and *Time* and *Picture Post*, which were widely read in South Africa and contained documentary photographs by internationally renowned photographers. As a result American (and to a lesser extent, European) documentary models influenced the documentary tradition in South Africa. Some of the figures in the American documentary movement include Jacob Riis (1849 – 1914)[40], Lewis Hine (1874 – 1940)[41], and Margaret Bourke-White (1904 – 85).[42]

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[40] Jacob Riis, the Danish immigrant photographer who worked in America, is widely considered the first documentary photographer proper (Clarke 1997: 147). His seminal photographic essay *How the Other Half Lives* (1890) is the first to consciously associate photography with a moral drive and vocabulary. Riis's essay focused on the appalling living conditions and poverty of the immigrants living in New York's Lower East side where he exposed the urban squalor of industrialised America of the late 19th century. These works function as social propaganda that aims to propel people into social action to help their fellow person. Like Riis, South African social documentary photographers aimed to capture and expose the living conditions and poverty and their works similarly function as social propaganda (what Paul Weinberg calls "morally honest propaganda"), which was intended to appeal to their viewers' sense of moral outrage.

[41] Since the 19th century the camera had been regarded as a 'scientific' tool. Lewis Hine, a trained sociologist, used the camera as a tool for research and called himself a 'sociological' photographer in a conscious stand against Steiglitz's Modernist 'artistic' standards. Hine, like Riis, also created documentary essays photographing immigrants as well as sweat-shops and child labour (figure 25). The human figure was central in all Hine's documentary photographs of urban and industrial America. Hine is often credited with an ability to depict his subjects with dignity and compassion. He acknowledged the subjectivity of his photographs and described them as 'photo-interpretations' and 'human documents'. According to Clarke (1997: 148) 'Hine never exploits. Just as he would alert his subjects to their being photographed, so his treatment is to allow the subject to remain separate from, rather than dominated by, the camera. The figures remain ascendant, free of propagandist or polemical intentions on the part of the photographer.' The tradition of compassionate documentary photography, which focuses on the ways in which political events influence individuals rather than providing party – political propaganda, influenced South African photographers such as David Goldblatt. This is apparent in the fact that Goldblatt's subjects are aware of the camera and the way that he allows his subjects dignity and gives them the freedom to position themselves for the camera. Goldblatt, like Hine, acknowledges the interpretive and subjective nature of photography.

[42] The depression in the 1930s combined with the drought in Oklahoma provided much opportunity for the furthering of documentary photography in the USA. In 1935 the government set up the Farm Security Administration Project (FSA), directed by Roy Stryker, and commissioned several photographers to go to urban and rural areas and record and document depression conditions. These photographers included Dorothea Lange (1895 – 1965), Margaret Bourke-White and Walker Evans. Clarke states that the photography linked to the FSA 'declares its meaning in relation to a highly charged and specific set of visual strategies, codes of reference in which the subject, like history, is subsumed into a larger symbolic

In 1951, *Drum*, a South African picture periodical was launched which was influenced by the American and European picture magazine formula. The magazine, originally called the *African Drum*, [43] was initially aimed at a largely conservative 'traditional' black audience and contained articles on tribal history, for example, an article in May 1951 on the 'Balia of N. Rhodesia' called 'Know Yourselves'. The photographs with this article are similar to those taken by Duggan-Cronin discussed earlier and they show people in traditional dress with no sign of Western influence sitting in front of a grass hut. Here a magazine that was allegedly catering for a black audience is perpetuating a colonial myth of idyllic tribal life. It is not surprising that the magazine was initially not very popular.[44]

When Anthony Samson took over the editorial control a few months later, the magazine's focus shifted. In the 1950s the new *Drum* targeted the emergent vibrant urban black South African culture. The first anniversary edition of *Drum*, which included an exposé

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role and meaning. The subject is seen as iconic, so that the ideal documentary image, ironically, would speak to an assumed universal condition' (1997: 153).

Clarke proposes that the photographic corpus of the FSA is characterised by 'an emotional language, which feeds off the visual rhetoric of the photographic space,' (1997: 149) and this is apparent in Margaret Bourke-White's (1937) essay *Have You Seen Their Faces* (this essay was co-authored by Taylor Caldwell, but Bourke-White was solely responsible for the photographs). There is a distinctive subject position for the reader of such images who is meant to respond in a specific emotional way. There is an over coding of these images which becomes clichéd as the visual and narrative strategies become predictable (Clarke: 1997: 150), for example, in *Sharecropper's Home* (1937) (figure 26). In this photograph we see a black child standing in a doorway with a dog, which is a sentimental element. On the wall in front of the doorway we see pages from magazines (which have been used as insulation) wallpapering the walls. These pages are advertisements for various consumer products that the child clearly does not have access to. Photographs such as these were used in a 'polemical, even propagandist context'(Clarke: 1997: 149). It was this 1930's documentary tradition that came to be particularly influential in South African social documentary photography. This influence is apparent in photographs such as Peter Magubane's *Untitled* (undated) (figure 27) and Paul Albert's *Untitled* (undated) (figure 28). Albert's photograph has a particular similarity to the example by Bourke-White discussed above . This can be seen in the subject: an extremely neat but very poor run down environment which also has magazines and newspaper pages and adverts of consumer products (in this case covering the roof) and two figures looking toward the camera. In all these photographs the children look up at the photographer, their innocent faces somehow appealing to the viewer to help them. These images use clichéd visual codes to lead the viewer emotionally. In South African social documentary photography there is a tendency to reduce the subject to a stereotype, for example a poor, ragged, black child appealing for help and this is done through the use of clichés.

[43] The magazine began in March 1951 and was originally edited by Bob Crisp.

[44] The circulation figures in the first few months never got much above 20 000.

of near slavery conditions on a potato farm in Bethal, established interest and acceptance (and later popularity[45]) within the black urban community and also established *Drum*'s operating method for the next decade. This modus operandi was that of a strong social documentary tradition with a particular emphasis on the exposé. *Drum* magazine was richly illustrated with photographs, most of which adopted the documentary and photo journalistic codes of story telling in picture magazines like *Life* and *Time*. Many of the formulas of presentation and rhetorical devices of *Drum* seem to have been taken from American and German photojournalism magazine traditions, and adapted to a South African context (figure 29-30). Jurgen Schadeberg (1931-)[46], *Drum*'s photographer and photo editor, was particularly influential in this respect, as he trained in Germany. Paul Weinberg (1989: 62) describes Schadeberg's own work as 'somewhere in between the "on the beat" reportage photographer and the considered documentary photographer'. This combination of considered documentary and reportage photography influenced South African documentary greatly in later years. *Drum* became a training ground for many of the most renowned South African documentary photographers, including Peter Magubane, Alf Khumalo, Bob Gosani, Gopaul Narainsamy and Ernest Cole, and Schadeberg was their influential teacher. The photographic conventions of *Drum* were that of black and white photographs shot on square medium format and rectangular 35 mm Leicas. The exposé method of reporting led to a 'shooting from the hip' style of photography. Photographers disguised their cameras in cartons, bags and even loaves of bread in order to get their (often forbidden) shots.

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[45] Sales rose 'as black interest and confidence in the magazine increased. Sales reached 65 000 in October 1952' (Osman: 1984) and later reached 100 000.

[46] Schadeberg studied photography at a college in Hamburg, Germany, and trained at a photo agency. For the first year after he joined *Drum* (in September 1951) he was the only photographer who had any experience and between himself and journalist Henry Nxumalo, they were responsible for almost all the stories and pictures in the magazine (Scadeberg 1984: 1445). Later when Schadeberg had trained some black photographers he became a picture editor, which included being responsible for art design and graphic design (Schadeberg 1984: 1447). It was in his role as a photographer, designer and picture editor that he was particularly influential and his training in Europe in the international codes of presentation of picture magazines is apparent in the image layout, text and image combinations, use of limited colour in combination with black and white and the graphics in *Drum*.

The exposé style of reporting is evident in Bob Gosani's photographs of *The Tausa* (figure 31-33), which were taken for the fourth anniversary edition. This story was written by Arthur Maimane and it exposed the system of humiliating body searches which took place in the prisons, where naked prisoners would have to perform a dance to show that they had no illegal items on them after returning from working outside the prison. Taking photographs in the prison was impossible so the photographer and journalist toured the jails looking for peepholes, hideouts or overlooking buildings (1984: 1439). At 'the Fort', the most notorious of the jails, they noticed a nurse's home overlooking the prison. The editor phoned and got permission from the superintendent to 'photograph views of Johannesburg' (1984: 1439). Gosani and Maimane got Sampson's white secretary Deborah Duncan to pretend she was the photographer and they went as her 'boys' (assistants) (Samson 1984: 1439), because to send two black men to photograph the view would have been suspicious. While Duncan chatted to the superintendent and pretended to take pictures, Gosani and Maimane trained their powerful telescopic camera on the prison yard. Sampson (1984: 1439) described the 'Tausa dance':

> Suddenly the naked man jumped up in the air like a frisky monkey, clapped his hands above him, opened his mouth and turned round in the air so that he landed with his back to the warder. Then he bent down with his arms stretched out, while the warder watched him intently. The naked man looked round at the warder who nodded; he picked up his clothes from the ground and walked off to the cells.

In these photographs the humiliation to which black people were subjected to in the prison system during apartheid is clearly exposed. In these photographs we see about 100 black men in the enclosed, high-walled concrete yard, sitting in lines facing away from the guard who stands in the middle left of the photograph. A naked man in front of him is midway through his 'dance'. He has his one leg and his arms raised while he balances on the other. The clothed white guard studies the man performing the 'Tausa' while a naked man walks out of the frame towards the cells carrying his clothes. This example of exposé style of social documentary photography was the hallmark of *Drum* photography in the 1950s. Photographs such as these appealed to the viewers' sense of moral outrage at the indecency of such a system and encouraged sympathy for the victims of such

humiliating practises. It was this element of exposé and its concomitant sense of outrage, which was to become an essential ingredient of South African documentary photography.

Although *Drum* photographers exposed the injustices of the apartheid system they practised a self-imposed restraint under which they exposed socio-political conditions without overt political comment. According to Arthur Maimane (1984: 1442) *Drum* went everywhere it could to expose injustice within the laws of an unjust society. In accordance with the principle of objectivity, the reporters attempted to stick to what they believed were the facts only and not to show opinion: 'Thus our political reporting was always deadpan and none of us could belong to any party or take an active interest in their affairs.' The magazine had to *seem* to be apolitical and objective as it ran the risk of being banned or closed down. According to Graeme Addison (1984: 1462): '*Drum* was neither a political paper, nor a newspaper of the record but was an entertainment-expose-picture periodical'. Addison continues:

> The curious thing about *Drum* – the *problem*, one could say – was that it appeared to function as a political instrument in spite of its tawdry, irresponsible air; that its commercial guise somewhat belied its importance as an articulator of black experience and black aspirations (Addison 1984: 1462).

Addison (1984: 1465) proposes that the magazine remains a problem for the critic as it involved a complex 'matrix of white entrepreneurship,[47] editorial opportunism and non-militant black talents whose primary interest was not in the liberation of the masses'. He says that *Drum* did not aim to mobilise these masses but it did educate and inform them. Addison observes that the magazine seemed to give equal attention to boxing and gangland crimes, and to the defiance campaign, and was disinclined to be affiliated directly with any single political organisation, even one with the prestige of the ANC 'although much of the material followed the political and social concerns of the ANC and the congress alliance' (1984: 1464). The journalists followed the anti-pass demonstrations, conventions and marches, the political splits and the new affirmations of

[47] Jim Bailey, who had inherited his money from the mining magnate, Sir Abe Bailey, largely financed the magazine.

pan-Africanism as well as gangsterism, social events, soccer, boxing, jazz and 'fiction, mudrucking, busty broads and huckster advertising' (Addison 1984: 1462). Addison proposes that its scope was therefore greater than the politically committed protest papers such as *New Age* and *Africa, South.*

Willie de Klerk (a *Drum* photographer) remembers this time in an interview:

> It was exciting working for the magazine. *Drum* had the guts to print and publish. They attacked anything that attacked people. But we were frustrated by much we had to deal with – the bad pay, the government not wanting to listen, the outside world not taking notice. This eventually got to all those newsmen, some turning heavily to drink. You'd find that while they got the stories, got the pictures they would not be accepted. But if it were a white photographer, the whole world would know about it (in Grundlingh: 1999: 246).

In the late 1950s it became clear that the feelings of post-war optimism[48] were unfounded and that the political situation was getting worse rather than better. The forced removal and demolition of the freehold Western townships such as Sophiatown contributed to the further breakdown of the brief urban cultural blossoming of which *Drum* was part. According to Grundlingh (1999: 246) 'This upsurge in creativity was considered marginal by the white establishment and with entrenchment of draconian apartheid laws it gradually dwindled, finding a new outlet in the documentation of the brutality of the state.'

[48] This optimism was based on promises (implied and real) that had been made during the war. Black South Africans 'were quick to grasp the ideological dangers of Nazism' (Oakes: 1992: 352) and some black South Africans joined the South African Defence Force while others moved into the cities to serve the labour needs of the wartime industries. In the army these men earned the respect of their white comrades. Many assumed that the relative relaxation of segregation in the army was a sign of a new relaxation of segregation once the war was over. Also, in 1942 when it seemed that South Africa was under threat of being attacked by Japan Smuts promised a 'retreat from segregation' (Oakes 1992: 360) and a relaxation of the influx control measures occurred. 'The relaxation of the Pass laws was accompanied by limited attempts to improve the living and employment conditions of Africans' (Oakes 1992: 361). In 1946 the Pass laws were re imposed but South Africa's 'ever-optimistic black middle class communities seemed perfectly justified in believing that racial discrimination had at last come off the rails' (Oakes 1992: 360).

Drum magazine played a vital role in the growth of the social documentary genre in South Africa. Not only was it a training ground for many of the photographers[49] of the 1960s and 1970s but it also established a style of photography that was to be influential in later years. Under the tutorship of Schadeberg, photographers came to value technical excellence of black and white shooting and printing, paying attention to lighting, angles, focus, depth of field, framing and tonality, always with a strong emphasis on composition. The photographs in *Drum* are as often light-hearted and witty, as they are serious and expositional. Although both the *Drum* photographers and the photographers of the next generation set out to photograph and expose social issues, *Drum*'s approach was less politically focused and motivated than that of the later photographers. *Drum* published photographs of political and social issues on an equal footing alongside images of boxing, soccer, and jazz, for example, while the photographers of the later years focused almost exclusively on the socio-political situation in relation to apartheid. The photographer's of *Drum* exposed the ills in what they believed to be a deadpan style of reporting, whereas the later photographers used a more heightened emotional language. As apartheid became more entrenched and the situation seemed more severe and the resistance movement grew, so the tone of the photographs of the 1960s and 70s became more serious and bleak and contained less of the light-heartedness and fun of some of the earlier *Drum* photographs.

Working parallel to *Drum*'s documentary photographers was Eli Weinberg (1908 – 1978), a trade unionist, ANC member and activist, who documented the resistance movement from within. Paul Weinberg (1989: 61) comments as follows on the roles played by *Drum* and *New Age* photographer Eli Weinberg:

> It is important to note a difference in style and content between *Drum* photographers and Weinberg. Weinberg was the serious recorder who looked at political events and people while the *Drum* photographers reflected on culture as well. As Schadeberg said, reflecting on that period at a documentary conference recently, 'we also went out to have a good time then'. Weinberg concentrated on

[49] *Drum*'s policy was to train black photographers. Without *Drum* a black photographic presence in South Africa in the 1960s and 1970s would probably not have existed.

> making a political statement of the time, while the Drum period is characterised by a broad look at black culture, up till then disregarded by the white-orientated media.

Eli Weinberg's book, *Portrait of a People* (1981), shows events and issues involved in the liberation movement between the mid 1940s and the early 60s. Many of the photographs were shot on assignment for *New Age*, an independent paper, which supported the ANC. Weinberg was closely involved with the early struggle and as a result his photographs have an informed, politically motivated quality that many others of this period lack. He photographed events of major political significance such as the Treason Trials, Defiance Campaign and the Congress of the People, trade unionism and solidarity as well as producing essays on housing, labour, women, children and education and portraits of leaders of the time including Mandela and Sisulu. Eli Weinberg's commitment to the anti-apartheid cause is clear from his writing and photography and is apparent in the great lengths he went to in order to photograph the struggle (despite being banned and being under house arrest and spending time in prison). In *Walter Sisulu reads Luthuli's speech* (figure 34), we see a large crowd of people gathered at a meeting listening to Sisulu. In the centre of the crowd are Helen Joseph and Weinberg's wife and his daughter. The picture has been taken from above and in the right corner of the frame we see a roof and a megaphone. When Weinberg took this picture he was restricted from attending any meetings because of a banning order. As a result of his being at this meeting Weinberg was charged with contravening this order. Weinberg had in fact been 50 yards away from the meeting on the roof when he took this picture and it was submitted as evidence.[50] He was acquitted. Here Weinberg reveals his determination to record the events of the resistance movement.

Weinberg's photographs are characterised by seriousness and starkness in the way he looked at the events and conditions of the socio-political situation under apartheid, which he presents without any softening or glamorising effects. In Weinberg's essay on housing there are several photographs captioned *Views of a typical compound* (figure 35-36). In

[50] Unfortunately a clerk of the court used a punch on Weinberg's negative when filing this evidence, hence the hole in the bottom of the frame.

these photographs the absolute squalor, overcrowding, poverty and horror of the living conditions of migrant labour are revealed. We see concrete beds barely big enough for a man, with no real separations to give privacy or space, and trunks, boxes and cooking utensils littering the dirty floor. The men, with bare feet and dressed in ragged clothes, look blankly ahead while some lie staring from their hard beds. The photographs have not had a lot of attention paid to composition: bodies and heads have been cropped off. These photographs have been taken with a flash, which does not allow for the softer effects of tonality. They are stark and extremely depressing. In these hard, gritty and unmanipulated portrayals of events there is less concentration on lighting, tone and composition and other effects, and more emphasis on an 'authentic reality' of the events being represented. Whereas in *Drum* photographers were encouraged to not take an overtly political stand and the magazine's photographs often had a comparatively seductive quality, Eli Weinberg's photographs in his clear partisan political stance are in some respects the forerunner of 1970s and 1980s documentary photography.

Throughout the 1950s the apartheid government had strengthened its position through force and discriminatory legislation. At the same time resistance politics also strengthened, giving rise to the Defiance Campaign, the Treason Trials and the writing and adoption of the Freedom Charter[51] by the Congress of the People in 1955. Early 1960 saw the anti-pass campaign, which was launched by the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), to which the police reacted with brutality at Sharpville, resulting in the death of 69 people and the declaration of a state of emergency. After Sharpeville the ANC and PAC were banned and their leaders fled into exile, and both set up military wings and adopted the armed struggle. This in turn led to the arrest of the *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Spear of the Nation – the armed wing of the ANC) leadership and the Rivonia Trials of 1963, which effectively sentenced the leadership to lifetime imprisonment. The government set out to crush oppositional organisations or groups and the 1960s were a time of brutal repression in which much of the hope for reform and idealism of the 1950s was smashed.

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[51] The Freedom Charter was a 'document propounding a non-racial society, liberty and individual rights' (Oakes: 1992: 517).

The photography of the late 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s is characterised by photographers working independently and individually to document the struggle[52]. As apartheid repression became more pervasive it was increasingly difficult for photographers to operate as groups or to work exclusively for one publication, because as groups they drew more attention, for example, from the police, and from censorship boards. It was easier to go unnoticed as individuals, and freelancing or working independently they recorded historic events as the Treason Trials (1956), Sharpeville (1960), the women's marches on Pretoria (1958 and 1965), the Rivonia Trial (1963), stayaways, boycotts, as well as socio-political issues such as poverty, urbanisation, migrant labour, squatter camps, forced removals, conditions on the mines and mass meetings. Many of these resistance images have a stark quality that aims to reveal the anguish and tragedy of this time. The style of photography that developed greatly influenced the work of the generation that followed.

Ernest Cole [53] (1940 – 1968) who worked independently, produced a documentary essay, *The Mines* in *House of Bondage* (1968). It is a photo essay comprised of a written text[54] that explains the conditions on the mines, and photographs that document them. As a black man in apartheid South Africa, Cole had a different sort of access to the mines than a white photographer with liberal or press affiliations would have had. He befriended black guards at the gate and appeared so often that the guards assumed he worked there and let him in, inadvertently giving him considerable freedom to explore the mine

[52] The second generation of struggle photographers emerges mostly from the *Drum* 'school'. Photographers working during this time include Peter Magubane, Ernest Cole, Ian Berry, Leon Levson, Ranjith Kally and David Goldblatt. These photographers (particularly black photographers) worked under terrible conditions. They were regularly harassed, arrested, tortured, banned, placed under house arrest and some such as Cole and Eli Weinberg, were forced into exile. Generally black photographers had a much harder time doing their jobs than white photographers did, for example, Magubane was arrested and spent 586 days in solitary confinement and 6 months in an ordinary jail, and was placed under house arrest so he could not practise as photographer. Magubane effectively lost more than 10 years of his photographic career owing to these measures against him.

[53] Ernest Cole's name was formerly Kede. He had himself reclassified as coloured so he could move more freely in order to take photographs.

[54] In Cole's essay the text attempts to be factual and 'objective' and is used to ground, clarify and explain the photographs.

compound (Cole: 1968: 23). Cole's essay follows the path of a mine worker, from his arrival from a rural area, through recruitment, assignment, fingerprinting, medical examination, transportation to the assigned mine, the living conditions in the compounds including accommodation, recreation, and food. It ends with the men returning home or returning to the mine for another contractual term. In the photograph captioned *During group medical examination the nude men are herded through a string of doctors' offices* (figure 37) twelve naked men are seen from behind and are placed diagonally across the format, their arms raised. They have been stripped of clothing, dignity and individuality, their papers are lying on the floor behind. The photograph's caption indicates that they are being processed and classified. Photographs such as this operate on a similar level to Gosani's *Tausa* photographs, discussed earlier, as they expose the situation in South Africa (in this case for a foreign audience – this book was banned in South Africa). In spite of the difficulty associated with the fact that Cole's camera was disguised in a brown paper bag when he took this photograph, the composition, lighting and tone are perfect. Cole is heir to the *Drum* emphasis on technical proficiency and attention to formal pictorial considerations. In his photographs in the mine compound and barracks (figure 38) we see similar pictures to those taken by Weinberg, in terms of the subject: squalor, poverty and overcrowding in similar environments with concrete bunk beds. However in Cole's work the photographs were taken using natural light and as a result are more tonal. Cole's photographs have been framed with attention to the composition so that even in photographs of the most dire circumstances there is more of an element of the aesthetic[55] than in Weinberg's pictures, although they maintain a hard expositional quality.

Peter Magubane, who was also trained at *Drum*, shows a similar approach to Cole. In Magubane's work we see the same subject matter being depicted and a concern for formal qualities. Magubane's *Wenela Mine Recruiting Corporation medical checkup* (ca.1968) (figure 40) in *Magubane's South Africa* (1978) shows almost the identical image as Ernest Cole's photograph, except that in Magubane's picture we see the men

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[55] Likewise in Magubane's picture (figure 39) of the hostels there is an eye on light (diffused natural lighting), a full range of tones and an interest in a dynamic composition (strong horizontals, verticals and intersecting diagonals).

from the front. His caption explains that stripping naked is very offensive to Africans and so it exposes the humiliation to which black people were subjected under apartheid. In Magubane's image the men stand behind a white line which leads the eye off into the right of the frame where a doctor stands and examines the men who stand with their hands up, as if being arrested. This white line is extended in the receding white papers, which lie on the floor in front of the men and in the white bands of fluorescent tubing, which follow the same diagonal. The solid form of the body of one of the men cuts off the left quarter of the frame, which creates a tension in the composition. In Magubane's image, as in Cole's, the lighting, tones and composition are beautifully arranged. This makes the cruel and humiliating treatment of the recruits seem even more poignant.

During this period the serious tone of photographs reflects the seriousness of the times. Photographs such as Magubane's and Cole's take an unflinching look at the social and political situation. The element of exposé is crucial to these photographs, which aim to mobilise the viewer's conscience. Cole and Magubane both position the viewer as a privileged observer to the events represented through a 'window on the world' so as to reveal events to which the middle-class viewer would not normally have access. However, although these photographers were working in a similar expositional way to *Drum,* as independent photographers they were no longer obliged to uphold journalistic neutrality in the same way as they did when they worked for *Drum.* Their partisanship and political commitment is apparent in their work, including the subjects they photographed, the sympathetic way in which they photographed them and the lengths they were prepared to go to (jail, exile, torture) to reveal what was happening in South Africa.

However, in spite of a declaration of their partisanship, they continued to use the 'objective' language of documentary in their imagery. Their presence as photographers is consciously effaced and the 'neutral', 'window on the world' to which the viewer is exposed does not acknowledge the photographer's partisan presence. If we compare the same photograph by Peter Magubane (figures 41-42) as it is presented in two publications, it is apparent that there is a shadow of a photographer in the former which

has been cropped out in the latter. The clue that would have alerted the viewer to the presence and mediation of a photographer in the taking of the photograph, has been removed.

The harsh clampdowns of the early 60s dealt the resistance movement a major blow, but by the late 1960s a new period of resistance politics was beginning, which included the growth of black consciousness,[56] the foundation of the South African Students' Organisation (SASCO), the setting up of The Black People's Convention (BPC)[57], the strikes of 1972 and 1973 culminating in the student protests of 1976. The government reacted to these protests with extreme brutality – killing hundreds and detaining thousands[58].

The photographs of this period are characterised by a growing involvement in and sympathy for the struggle on the part of the photographers. As the events of the struggle against apartheid became extreme, so Magubane's photographic position became more militant and his alignment with the struggle more apparent, culminating in his book *June 16* (1986) where the viewer is made aware that Magubane stands on the side of the oppressed. This deliberate partiality was to become the rallying call of the photographers of the next period. In *June 16* many of Magubane's photographs have less of the formal elements (light, composition, tone) than the earlier ones, and more focus is placed on capturing the events as they are played out. The light is hard and the pictures sometimes unfocused.

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[56] Black consciousness was an 'ideology developed primarily by black students after 1968 that blacks (Africans, Indians and coloureds) had to liberate themselves psychologically from the effects of institutionalised racism and white liberalism. This implied a rejection of all "white" values and the inculcation of a positive black world view' (Oakes 1992: 515).

[57] The Black People's Convention was 'an umbrella body set up in 1972 to co-ordinate the activities of the adherents of black consciousness' (Oakes 1992: 515).

[58] 'According to the government appointed Cillie Commission of Enquiry 575 people died. Police action resulted in 451 deaths. 3907 people were injured. The police were responsible for 2389 injuries. Both the death and injury figures were disputed by various sources as being too low. 5980 were arrested for offences related to the resistance in the townships' (Magubane 1986: unpaginated).

The events of 1976 led to hundreds of young members of the 'Class of '76' leaving South Africa for training in armed resistance (within the armed wings of the ANC and PAC), and within a year these armed fighters were returning to South Africa. The government intelligence systems monitored the youth and crushed many of their campaigns. In 1977 the death of Steve Biko while in police detention dealt black consciousness another blow. Shortly after his death 17 organisations and two newspapers were banned. The repression continued unabated and yet the resistance movement gained momentum, not only from black supporters but also eventually from a younger generation of whites who were impatient with apartheid and worked actively to oppose it. The late 70s and the 1980s were the most turbulent, violent and most repressive apartheid years. In the mid-1980s a state of emergency was declared which allowed for mass detentions and brutal attacks by security forces.

In the late 1970s a new generation of photographers emerged who were impatient with apartheid. The battle lines were now clearly drawn and photographers set out to challenge the regime in a much more militant way than before. The photography of this time is characterised by a collective, uniform approach and a further solidifying of documentary conventions.

In the curator's preface for the 1997 exhibition *PhotoSynthesis*,[59] Kathleen Grundlingh (1997: 4) observes that social documentary photography was used 'primarily as a recording tool to bring about social change. South African photography played a vital part in the struggle against apartheid.' Photographers of this time felt a 'common desire to testify to the injustices and atrocities of the government, distribute images of resistance, and contribute to the development of politically engaged documentary photography' (Sanner: 1999: 256). In the light of increasingly restrictive government legislation these photographers committed themselves to 'morally honest propaganda' which attempted to reveal what the apartheid government was attempting to conceal (Sanner 1999: 256) (figures 43-48).

[59] This exhibition looked at photography (both documentary and art) that had been made in South Africa after 1990.

In an interview (1990: 62) Omar Badsha notes that in the 1970s South Africa was silent photographically, particularly as regards black photographers, but the 1980s were what he calls 'the decade of the image'. He states: 'In the 80s you had a new culture beginning to emerge, built on non-racialism. This is militant culture expressed through the mass, grassroots movement; it has been articulated through photographs, through posters, graffiti, song, dance. But overall, it was the era of the photograph' (Badsha 1990: 62). The 1976 Soweto upheavals had galvanised the opposition into overt action. Since many forms of writing were suppressed during this time owing to restrictions placed on the press, oral and visual forms of storytelling, such as photography, became more important. The liberation movement used these visual stories to heighten awareness of the plight of South Africans both within the country and when garnering support abroad. This young second generation of struggle photographers later became known as 'The Beyond the Barricades'[60] generation of photographers and they became the tellers of the stories, which the apartheid government had suppressed. They told of the suffering and struggle in South Africa, sometimes speaking for themselves and sometimes on behalf of those who had been denied a voice, but they told these visual stories with a view to influencing their viewers to resist the apartheid order.

The story that was being told during this time was considered to be more significant than its teller, and the individual was less important than the group. This generation of struggle photographers includes Omar Badsha, Steve Hilton-Barber, Rashid Lombard, Chris Ledochowski, Roger Meintjies, Judas Ngwenya, Lesley Lawson, Gideon Mendel, Santu Mofokeng, Themba Nkosi, Cedric Nunn, Guy Tillim and Paul Weinberg. Many of them

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[60] This collective name for the 'struggle' photographers of the 1980s is taken from the title of an important group photographic publication called *Beyond the Barricades: Popular Resistance in the 1980's* (1989). This book includes the work of South African photographers such as Omar Badsha, Julian Cobbing, Paul Grendon, Steve Hilton-Barber, Dave Hartman, Rashid Lombard, Roger Meintjies, Gideon Mendel, Santu Mofokeng, Themba Nkosi, Cedric Nunn, Billy Paddock, Myron Peters, Chris Qwazi, Jeeva Rajgopaul, Guy Tillem, Gill de Vlieg and Paul Weinberg. It is interesting to note that in the spirit of collectivity of the 1980s the photographers' names are not acknowledged on the pages on which the photographs appear but rather at the back of the book.

were in some way involved in the formation of the Afrapix Collective[61]. Grundlingh (1999: 248) remarks that co-operatives (like Afrapix, The Brotherhood, Dynamic Images and The Black Society of Photographers) 'were instrumental in unifying creative talent, providing photographers with support and a strong community base'. This collective approach to social documentary resulted in 'struggle' photographers taking part in community workshops, group exhibitions (for example, The Culture and Resistance Festival of 1982), group publications (including *The Cordoned Heart* and *Beyond the Barricades*) and the formation of a picture agency, Afrapix. The Afrapix Collective was instrumental in the passing on of basic photographic skills through community workshops and exhibitions. 'The slogan of its grassroots programme was "Each One Teach One"' (Sanner: 1999: 256). The collective approach also resulted in a certain uniformity as the documentary codes solidified.

Andries Oliphant suggests that during the struggle many South African artists collectively and individually attempted to cross the barricades erected by apartheid. 'These photographers sought to galvanise perceptions in support of the oppressed' (Oliphant 1991: 159). David Goldblatt has emphasised the radical political agenda of these photographers, by stating that they 'wielded their instruments like guns against the prevailing order' (Goldblatt in Oliphant 1991: 159). Oliphant (1992: 159) concedes that: 'While this approach had its pitfalls, it produced a solid photographic tradition to which both black and white radical photographers, who identified with the victims of oppression contributed.' Grundlingh (199: 248) observes that 'in the 1970's many photographers and writers were no longer able to support journalistic "neutrality" and committed themselves to the struggle. The camera, the pen and the canvas became instruments of war.' Photographers felt impelled to show their involvement through their pictures (Sanner: 1999: 253). 'Photographing the struggle in South Africa is also to participate in that struggle. No longer simple observers, photographers are active forces in that change'

[61] 'Afrapix, a photographers' collective was established in 1982 and served as a resource centre for community, student and labour organisations' (Grundlingh 1990:250). According to Cedric Nunn (1993: 207) there was some disagreement within the organisation as to whether they were to act primarily as a professional picture agency or whether they were to 'play a role documenting events' and to 'use photography in an educational way '.

(CASA in Sanner: 1999: 253). Struggle photographers felt the need to 'choose sides', to ally themselves politically, physically, culturally and sentimentally with the oppressed.[62] Badsha (1990: 62) spells out one of the reasons for doing this:

> You must remember that in a highly repressive society the people are afraid of the photograph, because the photograph can be used to identify you. So it is important to remember in the early part of the '80s unless you were part of the movement, people would be very suspicious of you. But as the movement grew larger it became more confident. People were not afraid to have their picture taken. In fact, to be photographed in a meeting or a demonstration became an act of defiance.

Documentary photography during late apartheid affirmed a modernist structuralist dialectic that proposed a binarism in which there are strict divides between concepts (for example good / evil, victim / perpetrator, right / wrong, for us / against us, white oppressor / black victim). Racial identity was something that was presented as something simple in apartheid. In the polarised environment of apartheid, South African photographers – particularly white documentary photographers – felt the need to declare themselves ideologically, to show their support for the struggle.

The necessity of partisanship calls into question any notions of objectivity conventionally associated with documentary photography. Although documentary photography pretends to be neutral this premise is a false one. To produce a social commentary implies a position of political partisanship, a stance or alliance. Documentary photography actually implies a desire to transmit an opinion and the subject is not neutral to begin with. However 'struggle' photography was clearly regarded as documentary despite its clear political bias. The 'struggle' required photographers not to be objective while still using the 'objective' language of documentary. Thus there is an inherent contradiction in 'struggle' photography: while aiming to reveal 'the truth' these photographers were required to 'take sides', eroding any claim they might have to an objective truth. It is as though 'struggle' photographers believed that because they had the moral high ground

[62] There was a similar growth in political activists by artists and much overt political art was created at this time.

(producing 'morally honest propaganda'(Sanner 1999: 256)), it was acceptable to be biased and to disguise issues contained within image selection and manipulation.

The issue of partisanship becomes even more complex when the moral or ethical implication of photographing the 'other' is considered (other classes, cultures, races and genders). This is of course not a simple issue in South Africa as the documentary photographer was sometimes from the same cultural / gender / class background as the subject, and his or her photographs don't always look particularly different from those of photographers who weren't from the same background[63]. The mine hostel photographs of Weinberg, Cole, Magubane, Ben Maclennan and Roger Meintjies show an extreme similarity in form and content despite them being from different races. When black photographers took on documentary photography as a mode of expression they inherited many of the conventions of photography which had been set up in the 19th century, and as a result their photographs may unintentionally reproduce or even reinforce the stereotypes, codes and myths of modernist-colonialist photography. However when white photographers photograph black people the issues are even more complex. Rosen (1992:4) argues that by choosing human subject matter other than one's own group, one runs the risk of robbing subjects of a voice. She argues, 'that every time a photograph is taken, even in the name of telling the truth or making the truth known, the subject is "spoken for" and silenced even further' (Rosen 1992:4). The question is raised whether it is at all possible to understand and sympathise with the plight of the other if one does not share the same social, political and cultural background. Rosen (1992: 4) suggests that it is possible for 'even progressive documentary photographers [to] align themselves with a power structure that has developed alongside colonialism: to control knowledge about the

[63] Margaret Waller (2000: 192) asks the question 'Do black photographers make different images to white photographers?' Waller demonstrates that they do by choosing two examples of photo essays on initiation, one by a black photographer Siphiwe Sibeko and another by a white photographer Steve Hilton-Barber. It seems the photographers have indeed approached their subject in different ways: Sibeko as an insider photographing a ceremony from his own culture and according to Waller (2000: 195) his photographs have 'a stillness and an intimacy, yet they avoid nakedness'. Hilton-Barber, on the other hand, was an outsider and his conditions of access were different because of various power relations. It has also been argued that these works were exploitative and insensitive to the cultural ceremony and the boys themselves. While this difference holds true in this particular example, it is, however, questionable whether Peter Magubane photographs in ways which are radically different from that of white photographers of his era, for example Ian Berry.

people who have been appropriated' and that regardless of the photographer's intentions documentary photographs potentially 'appropriate cultures and render them mute in a process that parallels the actual practise of imperialism'.

The tradition of social documentary in South Africa was built (and to a certain degree controlled) by a small group of male (often white) photographers. Although I am not trying to negate the enormous impact of the work of these people it needs to be pointed out that they were from a particular class, culture and gender which would have been inclined towards seeing the world in a particular way no matter how well intentioned they were. This is what Weinberg describes as 'mainly white, middle class, First-world men photographing everybody else' (quoted in Waller: 2000: 205). As discussed earlier, documentary photography in South Africa was built on the foundations of the colonialist-modernist photography of the 19th century and as a result it is possible that the white photographer in the photographing of the 'other' can perpetuate the colonialist ethnographic gaze.

Considering, however, that the political climate of the late 70s and 80s was so repressive that the transmission of information was seriously jeopardised, the photojournalist played an indispensable part in conveying information to an uninformed white audience. Jane Taylor (1995:6) asserts that:

> Photo-journalists over and over again placed themselves in contexts that were unimaginable to most of its readers, and through the wonder of the photographic moment, conveyed essential images from the dense matrix of South African experience.

Max Kozloff (1990: 146) proposes that 'the photojournalist threatens to supplant the soldier in today's popular depictions of war'. This is true in South Africa where there has been a glorification of the heroic documentary photographer who undertakes an almost mythological journey to find the truth. There is a perception that the documentary

photographer is a brave (usually male)[64] champion of a cause who puts himself in danger to bring back the truth to us.

Badsha says that at first 'struggle' photographers attempted to document the beginnings of the movement and these pictures were used locally to popularise the struggle and internationally to gain financial and ideological support for the struggle. This was achieved by showing photographs of the injustice, poverty and violence and appealing to the viewer's sense of moral outrage at what they saw, and photographers hoped to mobilise both the local and international community into action against Apartheid. 'As the photographers began to be more integrated into the movement, we were called on to document a whole range of issues – for example forced removals, rent struggles, labour conditions' (Badsha: 1990: 62). The 'Beyond the Barricades' generation were concerned with the development of documentary photography. 'We were convinced that as photographers we had a role to play in the process of change, and that a militant documentary photographic tradition was the most appropriate vehicle' (Badsha: 1990: 62).

The photographs of this time show the brutal suppression of the people by the apartheid regime. These photographs are characteristically in black and white, harsh, often grainy, 35mm work, and show mainly young people with clenched fists, burning barricades, military suppression, mass meetings, marches, funerals, tear gas, caspirs and injured bodies. The photography of this time is characterised by more 'action' and movement than pre-1976 images, which tend on the whole to show more 'victims' and passive, suffering people. Post-1976 photography generally shows people to be proactive, angry and empowered. Guy Tillim's *A pallbearer presses on through tear gas at the funeral of one of the 50 people killed by 'Witdoeke' vigilantes, Crossroads, Cape Town, May 1986* (figure 49) is typical of the photographs of this period. The pallbearer carries the coffin with one hand, the other is raised in the ANC salute while his watering eyes are pressed tightly shut against the tear gas and his face is fixed in an expression of pain and anger.

[64] Exceptions to this rule include Ingrid Hudson and Lesley Lawson, but generally the presence of women in 'struggle' photography was limited.

He wears the dress of a comrade soldier (beret - complete with UDF pin, a military type shirt and tacked on to an epaulet with a safety pin are scraps of material signifying the ANC colours). There is an element of explicit coding in such pictures: nothing is subtle or left to the readers' imagination.[65]

According to Sanner (1999: 254) 'Images such as these had few aesthetic pretensions, for they were intended to touch the political consciousness of the viewer.' Thus the formal and aesthetic aspects of photography were ostensibly considered of much less importance than the content[66]. Peter McKenzie went so far as to say 'with all respect due to technical competence, militant photography should be free from all aesthetic bonds and concern itself only with the force of its social impact' (in Sanner: 1999: 254). This is of course a tricky issue. War photography is often very beautiful and aesthetic even when it is showing the truly horrible. This of course leads to the secondary problem of the aesthetisation of violence. In Magubane's *The charred body of a black man was found under a burned truck* (1976) (figure 50) the awful subject has a weird aesthetic appeal. The composition is dominated by the body of a man placed diagonally across the rectangular format of the picture. The photograph contains very shallow depth of field, which creates an abstracted play of light and dark contrast in the background. In the foreground lies a body burnt beyond recognition (at the very front of the photograph we see abstract textures that are flesh and ash), which is rendered with soft tonal contrast. Photographers cannot separate themselves from their background or training and, as social creatures with a history and background in certain ways of looking, they cannot

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[65] This photograph is of particular interest because of the dark shadow of the photographer which has been cast onto the subject which is very dominant in the composition. Here again, as in the Magubane example mentioned earlier, an attempt was made by the photographer to disguise his own presence in the interests of maintaining an illusion of a 'neutral' frame. Guy Tillim at a photography conference (*Encounters with Photography*, Cape Town, 1999) spoke about what he perceived to be the problematic and dominant shadow of his head which is thrown onto the mourner in this photograph. Initially, he attempted to dodge it out but when he could not get rid of it he left it as it was.

[66] English documentary filmmaker John Grierson was very opposed to the word 'artistic' in the context of documentary, insisting that documentary was *not* art. Paul Rotha wrote that 'Beauty is one of the greatest dangers to documentary. Photographic excellence in documentary must never be permitted to become a virtue in itself' (quoted in Newhall 1982:144).

unlearn what they know. Almost instinctively they will begin to frame and compose in ways that have been learnt, even when photographing horrific subjects.

In the catalogue for the *Staffrider* exhibition, *South Africa Through the Lens,* the curators stated:

> The camera doesn't lie. This is a myth about photography in South Africa in the eighties that we will not swallow. In our country the camera lies all the time – on our TV screens, in our newspapers and on our billboards that proliferate our townships. Photography can't be divorced from the political, social and the economic issues that surround us daily. As photographers we are inextricably caught up in those processes – we are not objective instruments but play a part in the way we choose to make those statements. [The photographers in this collection] show a South Africa in conflict, in suffering, in happiness and in resistance. They examine the present and beckon the viewer to an alternative future ... Social Documentary Photography is not, in our view, neutral. In South Africa the neutral option does not exist – you stand with the oppressors or against them. The question we pose is how do photographers hit back with their cameras? (1982: unpaginated).

The camera was regarded, during the struggle, as simultaneously the teller of lies (by the apartheid government) and the teller of truth (by those involved in the struggle). Jane Taylor (1995: 6) asserts that 'the camera ... was the instrument of the *verities*; it told us the *truth* about ourselves: how we wept; how we killed; how we caressed; how we betrayed; how we died; how we endured' (my italics). These notions of truth and verities are possibly somewhat misguided since much of documentary (regardless of its source) is a highly structured, constructed, conventionalised genre.

The conventionalised nature of documentary photography is demonstrated in the lack of significant changes in the formal or conceptual codes of the images from the 1950s to the 1990s. Meintjies' documentary photographic essay on hostel dwellers in the late 1980's was photographed shortly after the scrapping of the pass laws and shows what was absent from all the previous documentary photography examples that I have looked at, that being the women and children, who were forbidden previously to stay in these hostels. In these photographs we see single beds which house entire families and life in and around the hostel: the shebeen, a funeral, the selling of chickens and the general living

environment. But it is the subject (the hostel dweller) that has changed, not the way of photographing or presenting people's lives. The formal visual narrative modes (ways of framing, grainy, high contrast, black and white) are as traditional or conventional in terms of documentary codes as Weinberg's examples from the 1950s.

In struggle photographs of the 50s, 60s, 70s , 80s and even into the 1990s one notices a high degree of similarity in the photographs. If we look at the photographs of Weinberg, Cole, Magubane, Ben Maclennan (figure 51) and Roger Meintjies (figure 52) of the hostels over five decades, there is not a lot of change in the conceptual or pictorial codes that distinguishes them from one another. These photographers all work with black and white film which is often grainy and high in contrast. They use texts to explain and ground the image and use a quasi narrative structure. They choose similar subjects and aim to expose the suffering of our fellow human rely on ideas of truth / proof and trade on notions of objectivity. They work with notions of binary opposites and pose simple identities and display a high seriousness in their work. The genre as a whole is generally cohesive and monolithic. In spite of the fact that these 'struggle' pictures were being created in the Postmodern era (which is playful and radically questions history, identity, absolutes etc.) these Postmodern concerns were bypassed in favour of a strong ideological message. The cause of the 'struggle' took precedence over creative experimentation and Postmodern concerns.

Alongside the social documentary conventions of the 'struggle' photography of the 60s, 70s and 80s, David Goldblatt's work appears quite unconventional. While Goldblatt is a self-avowed documentary photographer whose work obeys many of the conventions of traditional documentary photography, he was also concerned with creating a documentary aesthetic which is quite dissimilar from most other documentary photography practised in South Africa[67] during the apartheid era. Grundlingh (1999: 248) suggests that:

[67] It does however have parallels in the work of US photographer Walker Evans, for example.

> Although David Goldblatt did not document South Africa at the battlefront, his images forced many South Africans to take a cold hard look at their society. He concentrated his efforts on searching out the essence of South African society, looking with extraordinary clarity at the seemingly innocent everyday moments, and revealed in the inconspicuous detail all the complexities of the nation.

Goldblatt's different vision is apparent in his *New Year's Day Picnic, Hartbeespoort*[68] (ca 1955 / 60) (figure 53). In this photograph we see three white children sitting in the shade of a car. The eldest child holds the baby and the younger child lies sprawled on a blanket on the ground. This photograph encapsulates the 1960s period of legislated white 'superiority' that allowed for whites to enjoy the comforts and privileges of their position. The abandoned sleep of the child sums up the unthreatened comfort that legislated whiteness brought with it. The violence with which this position was arrived at is hinted at through the eldest child who holds a toy gun to the head of the unknowing baby who smiles back innocently. There is an uncomfortable paradox in this arrangement: the boy cradles the baby in his one arm while the other arm which holds the gun is firm and aggressive. Goldblatt is an acute observer of the ordinary: the grubbiness of the picnic boxes, a torn blanket, dirty pillows, the worn shoes of a woman and a car with scratch marks down its side all tell us something about a white lower middle-class family in South Africa in the 1960s. This is in contrast to the other documentary photographers who are mostly looking at a black experience of life in South Africa. During the apartheid era it was often the case that white photographers photographed other communities but not their own. Goldblatt on the other hand takes a hard look at the white community[69] (figure 54-55), which is often represented with an ambiguous attitude rather than a fixed position, leaving the viewer some space to interpret the image. His images are less didactic and less about a single narrative than most of social documentary in apartheid era South Africa, and there is more of a sense of several stories being played out simultaneously.

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[68] Hartbeespoort is a conservative town named after a dam outside Johannesburg. The dam was a favourite place of Afrikaans middle-class South Africans to spend weekends and public holidays.

Neville Dubow (1998:22) comments on a group of exhibitions connected to a conference on photography held in 1988 at the University of Cape Town. Many of the images at this conference were traditional documentary 'struggle' images showing 'violence whose impact bore testimony to the symbiotic relationship between violent events and striking photographic imagery' (Dubow: 1998: 22). He comments:

> Among these graphic records of overt violence were images of a different kind. They were altogether quieter, distanced, but not wholly removed. Seen among the documented evidence of confrontation and carnage, they still seemed to be part of a whole. There was a subversive edge to them – in the sense that Roland Barthes implied when he pointed out that 'ultimately photography is subversive not when it frightens, repels or even stigmatises, but when it is pensive'. These were images of a thinking kind. They were concerned with structures of a physical sort, with another kind of narrative.

Goldblatt's photography serves as an example of this 'other kind of narrative'. Goldblatt has said (1998: 7) that he felt unable to function as a 'struggle' photographer.

> Not only did I lack experience and skill and the nerve to operate coolly in situations of violence and confrontation but I seemed deficient in an essential ingredient: I felt no driving need to record those situations and moments of extremity that were the stuff of the media. It was to the quiet and the commonplace where nothing 'happened' and yet all was contained and imminent that I was the most drawn.

Dubow (1998: 24) argues that despite Goldblatt's protestations that he was reluctant to use his camera 'overtly as "an instrument of struggle", it has in fact been a tool in which South African realities have indeed been confronted. That the nature of this confrontation has been oblique, rather than head-on, does not in any way detract from the clarity of his vision'. Although the element of exposé is absent in Goldblatt's work (which separates him from struggle documentary photographers), 'there is a moral dimension to his work; it embodies what might justifiably be called a documentary conscience' (Dubow: 1998: 26), which connects him to them.

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[69] In *In Boksburg* (1982) Goldblatt deliberately chooses a community and mining town similar to the one he grew up in as he felt he would have a better understanding of a town like this than one with which he had no connection.

Despite being produced earlier than Meintjies's essay (discussed above), David Goldblatt's book *On the Mines* (1973) is formally, aesthetically and conceptually different from the essays of Meintjies, Maclennan, Cole or Magubane. Goldblatt insists he is a documentary photographer but his works have a very different quality to the other 'struggle' and social documentary photographers. Although he places himself firmly within the documentary context, in my opinion he exhibits some documentary tactics which show a different approach to the previous examples.

On the Mines is comprised of several essays: *The Witwatersrand: a time and tailings* (which focuses on structures and paraphernalia surrounding mines) containing an essay by Nadine Gordimer, *Shaft Sinking* (a photo essay on shaft sinking in the mines) and *Mining Men* (which focuses on the men who work on, manage and own the mines). The structures and accessories of mining in the first essay, *Witwatersrand: a time and tailings* are largely deserted. If we do see people they are far off in the distance, cropped so close that we can't see their faces or bodies properly. Instead the stories or people who are connected to the mines are represented by metaphor or metonymy, for example, re-photographed pin-up photographs on the side of a partially demolished mineworker's bunk (figure 56), an abstracted close-up of a mine dump or an enormous pile of shovels in a salvage yard. The second essay *Shaft Sinking* (figure 57) is, in many ways, the most traditional documentary of the three as it documents the story of the sinking of a mine shaft. Yet, even here there is an abstracted quality of the images due to the sharp light-dark contrast and the extreme graininess (Goldblatt either pushed his film dramatically or used a very fast film under such low light conditions), which give these photographs an air of mystery and abstraction. In some of the images one is completely dependent on the caption to understand what is going on. In *Mining Men* (figure 58) the subjects are all facing the camera and in most cases have eye contact with it, and are aware of it. They have posed and arranged themselves for the camera. An entire cross-section of the male mining community has been represented, from the mining house chairman, through to the spanner man, clerks, job seekers and nurse. These are very considered and composed pictures. All three essays combine to tell the story of the mines though they seem to be

spoken in three distinct visual languages. Goldblatt is showing the same story (that of the mines) from the same viewpoint (his own acknowledged subjective one) but he is using different narrational voices.

In *Bunks in a compound for black miners, Simmer and Jack Gold Mine, Germiston, 1965* (1965) (figure 59) we see a similar subject to the one dealt with by Cole, Magubane, Maclennan and Meintjies: that of the living environment of the hostel. However, here we see a fairly radical difference in treatment. Six concrete bunks almost fill the frame. Long shadows cast by the sunlight which shines through the beams above (the roof of the hostel has been removed) form abstract geometric patterns in the recesses of the bunks. In Goldblatt's version there are no people and therefore no victims: only a space, which is loaded with history and significance. There is none of the squalor and heartache of the earlier pictures, nor the over-coding of images in which poverty, squalor, unhappiness et cetera are shown. Instead the concrete frame of the bunks becomes a monument to the overcrowding and suffering which occurred and which are represented by a metaphoric approach, rather than spelling out the whole story to the viewer.

The relationship between text and image in the documentary style of Goldblatt's is different to the expositional style of Cole, Magubane or Meintjies. In his earlier work, such as *On the Mines*, Goldblatt's captions are brief (for example *Waste rock dump. Randfontein Estates, May 1967*), and there is no introduction.[70] He does not attempt to explain his photographs. In view of government restrictions at that time on overtly political texts, Goldblatt allows his subtle critique of South African society, economics, culture and politics to come through the photographs or through other texts which are connected to the photographs in oblique ways.

In Goldblatt's work one needs to consider the texts very carefully: not only what has been said, but what has been omitted and why. The relationship between the photograph and

[70] In *On the Mines* Goldblatt includes an essay by Nadine Gordimer and a written text which accompanies the *Shaftsinking* essay, but generally this publication is of few words. Most of the captions do not give us more than date, place and time. It is the photographs in combination with each other, with the text on the periphery, which produce the sense of story.

caption is more obtuse than with a traditional struggle documentary photographer. A fairly early example is *Mr and Mrs Richard Maponya, who live in Dube, the most prestigious of the Soweto townships* (1973) (figure 60). These were the wealthiest people in Soweto at the time, and they were politically unpopular. Goldblatt apparently first tried to photograph the couple themselves but failed to get a picture that worked. In the end he photographed their ornate bedroom and their photograph, which hangs above an elaborately decorated bed. Goldblatt's caption here is both factual and tongue in cheek. Although he has not photographed the couple directly he has revealed much about them and their environment and status through his photograph and caption. The photograph has a title, which includes names, dates and places and Goldblatt locates his subjects by describing them in very specific terms, which in turn draws attention to what information was put in and what was left out.

Goldblatt is very aware of captions and titles and their resonances. In a public lecture[71] he spoke of a mistake which was made in a Swiss magazine: the magazine published an article on his work in which they wrote the title *The* Afrikaners photographed. Goldblatt's title was in fact *Some* Afrikaners photographed. "*The*" implies that all Afrikaners are of the variety that Goldblatt photographed, whereas in fact Goldblatt chose the word "*some*" which implies a more arbitrary and small selection of Afrikaners. As the magazine changed the title so the meaning was altered.

In his introduction to *In Boksburg* (1982) Goldblatt says very little overtly about South African politics, and his captions are usually limited to the place, subject and time of the photograph. These photographs were taken within a very specific time frame in a very specific context.[72] What many readers miss, however, is the inclusion of several pages at

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[71] Michaelis School of Fine Arts, University of Cape Town, 1998.

[72] The time frame is outlined in the introduction by Goldblatt as being in 'the autumn and winter of 1979 and 1980' (1982: unpaginated) which was firmly within the apartheid era and during Nationalist rule (1948 – 1994). The place is the non-descript and racially segregated small East-Rand town of Boksburg on the South African highveld. Goldblatt describes Boksburg:

> From the unexpected softness of its man-made lake, to the tight circumscription of its pre-cast concrete walls, Boksburg is shaped by white dreams and white properties. Most of the

the back of the book, that are a copy of the declaration of the group areas act in Boksburg as approved by the state president.[73] One is meant to filter one's reading of the story of Boksburg through this act. Goldblatt was not able to make a direct comment on the group areas acts but through his inclusion of the act his critique is implicit. The captions, for example *At the corner of Commissioner and Eloff streets*, relate to the demarcations of the group area declaration at the back of the book.

Although Goldblatt is in many ways positioned firmly within the social documentary genre, in his work one begins to see the foundations of a post-apartheid photographic sensibility. It is in his quiet criticality, open subjectivity, subtlety, use of metaphor, metonymy and narrative fluidity that we begin to see some of the roots of a Postmodern, post-apartheid photographic genre. This is the subject of the next chapter.

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townspeople pursue family, social and civic concerns of respectable burghers anywhere, while locked into a deep and portentous fixity of self- elected, legislated whiteness (1982: unpaginated).

[73]Goldblatt quotes the group areas act declaration:

> Beginning at the beacon lettered X on the diagram of portion 69 (Jan Smuts Airport) (Diagram S.G. No. A.1281/ 48) of the farm Witkoppie No. 64-IR: thence eastwards and generally north-eastwards along the boundaries of the said portion 69 so as to exclude from this area, to beacon lettered O on the said diagram: thence north-eastwards in a straight line to the north-western beacon of holding No. 25 ... etc (Goldblatt: 1982: unpaginated).

CHAPTER TWO:

POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICAN PHOTOGRAPHY

In South African photography since the early 1990s, there has been an increasingly open, diverse and critical practice that is radically different to the ethos, style and conventions of traditional documentary photography. In order to understand the changes that took place in South African photography it is important to place this shift in a historical context, with a brief overview of the political situation.

President P.W. Botha resigned in 1989 and was succeeded by President F.W. de Klerk whose party then won the general election held that year. On 2 February 1990 he made a historic speech announcing that the ANC, SACP and PAC were to be unbanned. Restrictions on the UDF and COSATU[1] were lifted and the imminent release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners was announced. In May the Groote Schuur Minute recorded that leaders from the Nationalist government and the ANC had agreed to hold 'talks about talks'. After this meeting the state of emergency was repealed (except in Natal) and exiles were able to return without fear of prosecution. More 'talks about talks' took place in August in Pretoria. This resulted in the announcement of the suspension of the armed struggle, which was viewed as a huge step towards reconciliation. However, violence and random attacks occurred between Inkhatha[2] and ANC supporters, and violence flared up in the townships of the Witwatersrand and in Natal. the government was accused of being connected to 'third force' activities aimed at destabilising the peace process and negotiations.

During the early 1990s the Separate Amenities Act was lifted and the Native Land Act and Group Areas Act were repealed. In 1991 the government, the ANC, Inkhatha and a number of other parties began formal negotiations at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). After several breakdowns in communication it was decided in 1993 to hold elections for a democratic parliament in April 1994. The

[1] South African Communist Party, United Democratic Front and Congress of South African Trade Unions.

[2] Inkhatha is a 'Zulu national and cultural movement led by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi: opened its doors to all races as the Inkhatha Freedom Party in 1991' (Oakes: 1992: 518).

elections held on 27 April went off peacefully and were a euphoric time for South Africans: a new age had at last dawned. Under the new interim constitution a Government of National Unity was formed in which all the key parties were represented. The interim government had five years to decide on a final constitution and the new constitution was adopted in 1996, which included a Bill of Rights that outlined the rights enjoyed by all people. As part of the process of democracy building and reconciliation, the government set up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 1995 to uncover the truth about the political conflicts of apartheid. This took place between 1997 and 1999.

In 1990, with the release of Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC, freedom was attainable for the majority of South Africans. Cultural workers were freed from the imperative of dealing with political subject matter. This extended creative territory allowed the exploration of issues other than the socio-political. The general spirit of freedom of the 1990s is reflected in the creative freedom of this time. There suddenly emerged a huge range and diversity in the photographic products of post-apartheid South Africa by artists / photographers who largely worked individually, free from the dictates of institutions and organisations.

The lifting of sanctions and the end of the cultural boycott meant that South African artists were able to reconnect with the international art world. This exposure to global culture introduced Postmodern and post-structuralist critical discourse into South African image making,[3] something that had been delayed by the pressing issues of the struggle and the international isolation that came with apartheid.

Postmodernism and its theoretical-philosophical base, post-structuralism, had been in circulation in Europe since the 1960s and had been integrated into art practice for at least as long. There had, however, been limited impact on South African photography

[3] It also resulted in a great interest in South African art and photography internationally and suddenly there were many South African shows abroad (for example, *Art from South Africa* at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford in 1990, and involvement in the Cuba Biennale, Venice Biennale, Mali Biennale, and Dakar Biennale etc.) and two international Biennales locally (Johannesburg Biennials of 1995 and 1997).

and what little there was, was usually from academic environments where artists had access to some of the current international thinking.

The critique of representation has been hotly debated in fields such as literary theory and philosophy, and with respect to photography the impact of this critical thinking about representation resulted in documentary photography being questioned on several levels. One of the results of this interrogation of representation is that new forms of documentary / art have emerged which question the paradigms of documentary practice.

Post-apartheid South African photographers redefined aims and identities. This manifested in different ways in different photographers. Grundlingh (1997: 4) identifies these new concerns as:

> Gender issues, questions around an African identity, philosophical discourses about our place in the universe and conceptual works, which do not readily give up their meaning. The ordinary family snapshot is scrutinised, the established traditional landscape photograph is recast and historical processes are given new life. The use of photomontage and photo-construction, historically associated with propagandist work is revisited as is the traditional technique of hand colouring studio portraits fashionable in the 1930s and 1940s. In contrast to this the stark reality of our existence is conveyed through images by press photographers.

After the end of apartheid documentary photography underwent a crisis. The imperative to provide documentation of the ills of apartheid had disappeared and the function of exposé seemed redundant in the context of transparency and reconciliation. The new constitution was hailed as being one of the most just and progressive in the world. It gave equal rights to all groups regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, age and religion. As the voice of the 'other' could be heard, there was, apparently, no longer a need to speak 'for' the silent majority. People could now represent themselves.

Whereas, in the apartheid era, art photography was not accessible to black students, the end of racist discrimination in education meant that black students were able to study in traditionally 'white' universities and therefore had access to the study of fine art. This has led to the gradual emergence of a younger generation of black artists /

photographers, including Zwelethu Mthethwa, Senzeni Marasela, Tracey Rose, Mustafa Maluka and Berni Searle. However, possibly due to economic constraints as well as the perception that one has better employment opportunities in other more 'practical' fields of photography such as press or documentary, the numbers of black students enrolled in photography (and fine art in general) in universities are not high.

During the 'struggle' documentary photography was practised almost exclusively by men. In post-apartheid South African photography there are many more women practising as artist-photographers, for example Jean Brundrit, Penny Siopis, Senzeni Marasela, Jo Ractliffe, Terry Kurgan, Berni Searle, Jane Alexander, Minette Vari, Lien Botha, et cetera. This is partly because of a more liberated gender situation in post-apartheid South Africa in which women are (at least according to the constitution) recognised as equal. It also has to do with the fact that documenting the 'struggle' was considered to be too dangerous for women, and so women were to some degree marginalised by the overwhelmingly masculine 'clubs' of documentary and press photographers of the apartheid era.

Historical factors such as the TRC hearings contributed to the changing of photographic conventions. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission played a vital role in the rewriting of history. South Africans were forced to acknowledge the stories of suffering which were revealed because of their public platform. A human face emerged which complicated the stereotype of victim / victimiser. The victim at last had a face, an age, a name, and a viewable grief. The stories told were all different, revealing diverse points of view, but because of their very personal nature, their impact was immediate and visceral. Press photographs taken at the hearings, just like the hearings themselves (but unlike the struggle photographs of the 1980s) recreated hitherto unrecorded events. Press photographer Leon Muller's image of policeman Jeffrey Benzien demonstrating the 'wet-bag' method of torture, is a good example. This photograph is an interesting example of the photograph's ability to act both as witness and document of the past. Because the actual torture was not recorded at the time at which it took place, it can only be (like the stories of the victims) a retrospective reconstruction of the actual event. In this sense the photographs and stories of the TRC are fictional recreations of events which took place in the past. The torture event is, for instance, staged as a tableau. The situation being presented in

front of an audience becomes a document of a historical truth that is re-staged rather than an actual event; it stands in for the actual event.

Charlton and Rankin-Smith (1999: unpaginated) comment:

> Under Nationalist party rule South African history was interpreted and taught from a narrow framework that reflected and imposed the ideology of the dominant power, and suppressed that of all others. History is however, a rich repository of stories that can be retold from many often-conflicting perspectives. The past and its recollections remain a territory actively contested and the politics and processes of memory are continually being renegotiated.
> The creation, inscription and recording of our stories emerged strongly in recent South African art. These narrative artworks are usually reliant on figurative imagery from which stories can be read. Great moments in history or domestic dramas may be recorded, and narratives often include literary references, symbols or allegories that rely on shared experience or language for the viewer to decode.

Since the demise of apartheid both individuals[4] and organisations have questioned the past. Visual art and artists have not been exempt from this questioning and rethinking of our history. The significance of post-apartheid photography lies in the fact that different voices, different ways of telling different stories, and different ways of remembering have emerged. This is important in terms of the wider narratives of South Africa, many of which were aired at the TRC hearings. 'As the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission just recently has ended, [sic] it is fascinating to observe that artists are carrying out their own commission – the work of memory, questioning the archive and the apartheid heritage, the journeys of return, reconstruction and changes, the remains …' (Jan - Erik Lindstrom: 1998:9).

Artist Jo Ractliffe, in her work *Vlakplaas 2 July 1999 (drive-by shooting)* (1999), (figure 61) employs a very different method to the press photographer but, like him, she investigates the theme of retelling the past. Ractliffe creates an image shot from behind the wheel of a moving car. Significantly a rear-view mirror is centrally placed which directs the viewer towards issues of hindsight and looking back. The title of the

[4] For many decades the telling of history was from the specific and one-sided view of those in power. Every individual now has the opportunity to rewrite history. Rewriting self and culture (in a post-apartheid South Africa) can be regarded as a (re) collective process, one in which we survey and explore our own histories.

work makes reference to South Africa's pre-liberation history and also to the subsequent process (the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings) of unearthing these stories. Violence is intimated in the word 'Vlakplaas' – a notorious site of torture – and in 'drive-by' which suggests a careless perpetrator of suffering – a 'drive-by shooting' is one that is usually associated with bullets fired from a moving car. The shooting that takes place in Ractliffe's work is a photographic one; she captures a landscape etched in the memories of the victims and now in the psyche of the greater public through the revelations of the TRC. This work (which makes reference to the photographic 'truth documents' of the past) is made up of a continuous black and white contact strip in which one image overlaps with the next. As is the case with memory, distinct scenes and events have been blurred into one confused event, so that the whole is made up of fragments[5]. Fragmentation is a characteristic formal ploy of Postmodernism which foregrounds the fragility of a stable, contained, single reality.

If one compares Ractliffe's *Vlakplaas 2 July 1999 (drive-by shooting)* to Magubane's *The Notorious Green Car – a pot-shot from the back seat* (1976) (figure 62) one notices that the formal and conceptual codes differ substantially. In Magubane's documentary photograph we see a car that has been photographed from another car behind it, as is evidenced by the dirty windscreen. The car is positioned on the left side the road which stretches off into the distance of the highveld landscape. Protruding from the car at the focal point of the photograph is the arm of a man who is aiming to shoot at a target that one cannot see in this drive-by shooting. Whereas Magubane's photograph is clear and expositional and the viewer is left in do doubt as to the events occurring, Ractliffe's photograph is oblique and obscure. In Magubane's photograph it is an event that is being represented, whereas in Ractliffe's it is more an ambience or feeling which is being shown. Magubane's photograph acts as a 'truth document' and presents a single point of view, whereas Ractliffe's photograph does

[5] Ractliffe's 1997 exhibition *Guess who Loves You*, comprised nine large colour photographs. Here in subject, rather than treatment, we find a fragmentary quality. The subjects – the toys played with by her dog – are mutilated fragments. Siopis (1997: unpaginated) comments 'The fragment here is imaged as both whole- and part-object.' It is clearly the fragment that fascinates Ractliffe. She said of the toys: 'the one or two that remained whole did not interest me'. Siopis writes that 'Ractliffe's interest in the fragment is both icon and medium. The play of contingency and intention is fundamental to her practice. Her medium, photography, is quintessentially fragmentary, always being part of a larger whole' (Siopis: 1997: unpaginated).

not make claims on any one truth but presents multiple points of view, and through its cinema-like format references a constructed, more fictional re-telling of events.

The changes that took place since 1990 affected not only the political arena but also the creative one. Of the several ways in which photography was affected by socio-political and cultural shifts after 1990, one of the most significant changes, in terms of the aims of this dissertation, is the fact that distinctions between the categories of art photography and documentary photography have become blurred and indistinct. As Ractliffe's *Vlakplaas 2 July 1999 (drive-by shooting)* demonstrates, art photography selectively adopted some of the aims and conventions of documentary photography, but transformed the language of documentary into a more critical Postmodern discourse. This erosion of boundaries requires discussion.

Sekula (1984:21) observes:

> All photographic communication seems to take place within the conditions of a kind of binary folklore. That is there is a 'symbolist' folk-myth and a 'realist' folk-myth. The misleading but popular form of this opposition is 'art photography' vs. 'documentary photography.' Every photograph tends, at any given moment of reading in any given context, toward one of these two poles of meaning.

In the introduction to the catalogue for *Democracy's Images: Photography and visual art after Apartheid*, Jan-Erik Lundstrom (1998:9) ponders: 'What might happen ... with such a refined and specific tradition such as South African documentary photography ... ?'. Lundstrom (1998:9) suggests that 'documentary photography was, on the one hand, visually well formulated and rhetorically skilful, and on the other hand, completely or exclusively dependent on its context'. The question that was raised in the early 1990s was: 'Does South African photography depend on apartheid for its lifeblood?'. The answer was clearly 'no' as many photographers continued investigating social issues; they were just doing so somewhat differently.

During the last decade, and particularly since liberation in 1994, South African photographers have started to challenge the discourse of documentary photography. Kathleen Grundlingh (1997: 4) remarks on a contrast between pre- and post-1990 photographic practice. She notes that the dominance of social documentary and its use

as a weapon against apartheid 'meant that the more creative applications of the medium were relegated to the sidelines. Ironically, the demise of apartheid left these South African photographers each with his or her own creative crises. Freed from their collective political purpose, photographers have to redefine their individual photographic identities and aims.'

Writing in 1989 Paul Weinberg observed a change in documentary photography. He noted (1989:69) an attempt to find more creative responses to the genre:

> Recent work has indicated a shift into more in-depth community photography and more personal searches in the community of the photographer. Under such restrictions (Apartheid government press register as part of June 1988 State of Emergency) the camera seems likely to turn its energies to popular history and oral tradition, as has been the case in the struggles of South America.

Ironically this prediction was only fulfilled as apartheid was being dismantled and not, as one would have expected, during its harshest years. During the apartheid years the everyday narratives of ordinary people were marginalised, with the concentration being on the master narrative of the struggle. However, although the struggle dominated image making, some documentary photographers such as Santu Mofokeng wanted to show everyday township life going on simultaneously with the struggle. Mofokeng was dissatisfied with photojournalism in which photographs had to function as 'weapons of the struggle', and he felt that this was an incomplete picture of what was occurring. He states (2000: 13): 'I was unhappy with the propaganda images which reduced life in the townships to a perpetual 'struggle'. Mofokeng became interested in 'documenting the worlds that did not usually feature in the "struggle" images of South Africa so beloved of American and European audiences' (Mofokeng: 2000: 13). In the 1990s, due to the new democracy and perhaps because of an overexposure of 'struggle' photographs, foreign publications started to request photographs of ordinary life (shebeen, street soccer and home life etc) in the townships (Mofokeng: 2000:13). It is this attitude towards personal and community issues that emerges more and more in documentary after the end of the 'struggle'.

This difference is apparent in exhibitions such as *Democracy's Images* (1998), which attempted to understand what had been left in the wake of the dominant documentary

tradition. According to Hans Pienaar (2000: 10) 'The exhibition is a careful selection aiming to capture ... many fertile dimensions into which documentation through images has branched in 1995'. Pienaar suggests that *Democracy's Images* 'proves that the wonderful creative surge of those years is far from spent. On the contrary, this country is blessed with a formidable range of documentarists (a term that is needed to include the visual artist whose work strays into the field of documentary)'.

However, some documentary photographers of the struggle era have continued to practise in a largely unchanged way in the 1990s[6]. There were some changes; not to the way they viewed the world as photographers, but to what they were shooting. With the breakdown of apartheid the 'story' of the struggle vanished, with the result that documentary photographers who were working for press agencies were deprived of an income. Several, for example Gideon Mendel, went overseas to find other newsworthy subject matter, while others developed their own projects, such as Peter Magubane who documented the people of South Africa. Magubane's *Vanishing Cultures* (figure 63) is an attempt to record several tribal groups in South Africa, which apart from the fact that a black photographer is doing the photographing, has parallels with Duggan-Cronin's photographs of a century ago. Paul Weinberg, a documentary photographer active in the 'struggle' period, also documented the people of Southern Africa as part of an ongoing project during and after the struggle. In *Back to the Land* (1996), a book about land restitution, Weinberg looks at the changes which have taken place in post-apartheid society, but it is the *subject* which has changed somewhat and *not the ways of photographing the subject*, which are similar to the photographic conventions he used in the 1980s.

In September 2000 I conducted interviews with several press photographers and picture editors from the *Argus*, *Cape Times* and *Burger*. I also had informal conversations with press photographers working for press agencies such as Reuters and Associated Press (AP). I asked them what differences (if any) they felt had occurred in the photographs which had emerged in the press after 1990. Their answers were varied: some photographers felt technology (digital cameras, cell phones, fill in

[6] Examples of traditionalists include Guy Tillim, Cedric Nunn, Peter Magubane, Eric Miller and Steve Hilton-Barber.

flash, newspaper layout with computers) had changed their ways of photographing; others remarked that it was more difficult to find 'hard news' now. The focus has shifted from violence associated with the struggle to violence connected to crime, gansterism, and urban terror, but the 'higher cause' connected to the struggle has gone. Several respondents commented on a youthful idealism which they felt had existed formerly. It had enabled them to believe that what they were doing would create change. Mujahid Safrodien mentioned that during apartheid press photographers were largely white and now the profession was more open to everyone. He said that a black photographer like himself, living in and understanding a particular community, has better access to it than outsiders, and he observed that he often has the same point of view as his subjects.

In my opinion there have been a few changes in the formal character of press photographs over the last decade in Cape Town, but these changes are slight and are usually connected to the styles of particular photographers or picture editors, rather than a changing ethos. Photographers such as Garth Stead and Mujahid Safrodien have introduced more of an 'art' aesthetic into their photographs. This is apparent in their use of experimental techniques such as unusual angles, heightened colour and fill in flash. In some areas there appears to be a different attitude towards violent images, for example Andrew Ingram's photograph of Llewellyn Erasmus (figure 64), which instead of showing the whole body of the murdered child shows only his feet hanging just centimetres above the ground. This use of metonymy shows a new level of subtlety that was not often apparent during the struggle.

Since there is no longer the polarised divide between 'truth' (documentary) and fiction (art), art photography of the 1990s sometimes contains references to social documentary, and contemporary documentary photographers rely more on art conventions than their predecessors.

In order to demonstrate this point I will examine the work of David Goldblatt, who uses a more traditional documentary approach.[7] I will then compare his work to that

[7] As mentioned in Chapter One, although Goldblatt's works share some of the characteristics of traditional documentary photographers, his works also deviate from these conventions in significant

of Roger Meintjies,[8] whose 1990s 'documentary' works resemble art photography, and to that of Jean Brundrit, whose 'art' photography mimics documentary photography.

Roger Meintjies subverts documentary traditions. In *Van Riebeeck's Hedge* (1992) (figure 65-67), He undermines and questions the very documentary codes he had earlier endorsed. In one sense *Van Riebeeck's Hedge* continues documentary conventions and in other ways forms a radical rupture with it. In his earlier essay (discussed in Chapter One) Meintjies presents the photographs as 'truth documents', whereas in the latter work Meintjies interrogates and critically undermines the notion of 'truth' in documentary photography.

In order to comprehend Meintjies's radical departure from 'traditional' documentary conventions, it is useful to compare *Van Riebeeck's Hedge* with David Goldblatt's more conventional documentary treatment of the same topic.

In David Goldblatt's photograph captioned *Remnant of a hedge planted in 1660 to keep the indigenous Khoikhoi out of the first European settlement in South Africa. Kistenbosch, Cape Town, Cape. 16 May 1993* (1993) (figure 68), his view is that of a more traditional documentary photographer relative to Meintjies's *Van Riebeeck's Hedge* (1992) discussed below. Goldblatt's photograph displays his documentary photographic aesthetics (sharp deep focus, full tonal range, and considered composition).[9] Apart from these formal elements, Goldblatt's work is also more traditional than Meintjies's in the sense that there is a strong reciprocal relationship between the text and image, with the text explaining the history of the hedge[10]. Thus

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ways. It is with these reservations in mind that I use him as an example of a traditional documentary photographer.

[8] Although Meintjies practised as a documentary photographer in the era of the struggle he did in fact train in an art environment and studied fine art at the University of Cape Town.

[9] I would however like to reiterate that Goldblatt's image deviates (as demonstrated in Chapter One) from traditional 'struggle' photography in several ways. The crucial element of exposé is lacking; the caption is too detailed and doesn't allow the picture to lead us emotionally. The picture itself has a blandness (inclusion of the bin, 'Corobrick' path, nondescript looking bush), which is unusual in South African documentary, which often relies on sentiment or sensationalism to get its message across.

[10] Although his photographs are still fairly similar Goldblatt's captions have changed post liberation. In more recent work, such as *South Africa: the Structure of Things Then* (1998) Goldblatt has a much

the narrative is a product of the relationship between the text and image. [11] The image needs the text to tell us that this is a structure with historic and political significance and not some arbitrary bush. It is this information which allows us to construct a narrative around the image.

In Meintjies's photographs there is no text apart from the title, which is the only verbal clue we have to help us decode the obscure photographs. The narrative is to be discovered, not in a relationship between text and image, but in the relationship between the photographs themselves. Formally, the look of these photographs couldn't be more different. Some of Meintjies's images are taken on slow shutter speeds, they are out of focus, blurred, arbitrarily cropped, atonal, abstracted, very close up and generally very difficult to read. This work is made up of deliberately opaque images. In its presentation and subject the series sets up an expectation of a

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more comprehensive attitude towards the caption. It is as though he's finally been allowed to tell the fuller story. Not only is his introduction considerably fuller and more explanatory than before but he uses two sets of captions: a shorter caption, which accompanies the actual photograph and then the extended caption which adds a lot more information, research, anecdote and story in and around the photograph and still admits that it is subjective and selective.

> Although this introduction and the extended captions are more explicit and more detailed than I would have liked, they are no more than an attempt to give, for the reader who wishes it, an extremely condensed, highly selective insight into 'structural context', the densely complex matrix of cultural, social, political, and economic interaction from which the subjects photographed emerged and in which they had their 'being' (Goldblatt: 1998: 10).

[11] In Goldblatt's *South Africa: The Structure of Things Then* (1998), the historical narrative develops between the text and image but also between the images themselves. Goldblatt has been very aware of the relationship which develops between photographs that appear opposite to one another on the facing pages of his book (figure 69). Dubow (1998: 31) notes:

> Monuments and fences go together. The fence assumes archetypal form in the surviving remnant of the nine kilometre hedge of prickly almond, part of a defensive cordon that the first settlers in the Cape erected to protect their livestock from indigenous Khoikhoi – Van Riebeeck's Hedge. This is the grandfather of all South African fences, planted in 1660 on the instructions of the first commander of the European settlement in the Cape. On the facing page there is a juxtaposed image of some poignancy: a sculpture of a Khoisan in cellular underpants in the forecourt of the maximum-security prison on Robben Island. The work no longer exists, but its provenance is worth noting. It depicts the first political prisoner, the Khoi chief Autshumato, marooned on the island by the Dutch in 1658. The sculptor of the work, Japhta Masemola, was a political prisoner arrested in 1963 and held in jail for 26 years.
>
> The juxtaposition of the hedge to keep out the Khoi with an image of the first Khoisan notable to be imprisoned on the island, gives us a clue to the sequencing of the images in this book. A musical analogy is appropriate. There are dominant themes: possession and dispossession; transience and rootedness; barriers and boundaries; monuments and memorials. There is unfolding visual counterpoint. There are pauses, caesuras, and then the themes are taken up again, ranging from elaborate set pieces to simple humble subjects.

linear narrative, which is broken by the fact that the story one is expecting to follow never materialises properly and as such it does not seem to have a beginning or an end. 'All these techniques draw attention from the subject that photography is thought to record with utter transparency to the medium itself' (Godby 1993: 9). The abstracted images of Roger Meintjies's *Van Riebeeck's Hedge* are sketches and reflections. This is a personal essay with the emphasis on a private point of view. The root sense of the essay is one of something incomplete and partial, acknowledging the frame that can never include everything. This stands in contrast to the traditional documentary photograph in which ways of framing attempt to reveal as much as possible. As Godby (1993: 9) observes, the work is about concealment as well as revelation:

> Meintjies gives details of the urban environment without ever giving the identity of the place. Similarly he avoids giving any explanation of why he might have taken any particular photograph or why he took the photograph in the way he did. By refusing to enclose meaning within the photographs, Meintjies demands the viewer acknowledges the extent to which his or her own prejudices habitually contribute to the interpretation of documentary imagery.

Perhaps because the documentary genre was so dominant in apartheid South Africa, post-apartheid art photographers also take issue with, or critically interrogate documentary conventions. Like Ractliffe's *Vlakplaas 2 July 1999 (drive-by shooting),* Jean Brundrit's series *Does your Lifestyle Depress your Mother?* (1998) (figure 70), also uses and distorts the rhetoric of documentary photography.[12] This series consists of 12 postcard size, deliberately banal images of lesbian women going about their daily lives: sleeping, bathing, washing up, walking the dog, playing pool and so on. These images are inoffensively ordinary, which is precisely their point, as the artist wants to demystify representations of lesbians. These photographs re-construct a reality, which is deliberately fictive through its blatant contrivance. In this series, Brundrit photographs herself and other lesbian women in various ordinary moments. The surroundings are natural (usually the homes of the women photographed) but the suggested relationships are largely fictitious. Here Brundrit acknowledges the constructedness of her photographs and, by extension, all documentary photographs

[12] In these photographs one senses that the individual images have been shaped by other types of narrative vehicles, in particular the photo novel or *photo roman*, soap opera vignettes and film stills.

by revealing the artifice of her 'documentary.' Clues of the constructedness of these images can be seen in the repeated use of herself, the artist as performer, and the fact that her subjects are all clearly aware of the camera.

The curators of *Democracy's Images* (Bester and Pierre 1998: 101), when interviewing Brundrit, comment: 'Your images seem to exist in an ambivalent space, somewhere between "truth" and "fiction"' and she replies,

> Like all photographs, they're constructed images. The repetition of the mundane subject matter, the subjects' awareness of being photographed, the fact that the same people reappear in different images, all work to reinforce the fact that these photographs are staged. I wanted to confront the visual codes that we think make up reality.

Brundrit's work is more reflexive than traditional social documentary photographs and critiques the traditional representations of social documentary. In *Does your Lifestyle Depress your Mother?* she uses a documentary aesthetic on the surface, although the strategic conceptual concerns could be associated with contemporary Postmodern art practice. The work has a morphological resemblance to conventional documentary photography, but a conceptual affinity to a critical Postmodernism because of the explicitly political (gender political – lesbian subject) and deconstructive element of her work. This type of 'documentary' thus uses the aesthetics of documentary to deconstruct documentary.

Terry Kurgan's *Maternal Exposures* (1998) (figure 71) is another example of post-apartheid South African photography that questions where art ends and where documentary begins. Like Brundrit's work it also demonstrates a change of focus in that it is about the personal rather than the political. If one compares this work with an example of documentary from the apartheid era such as Gideon Mendel's *Crossroads residents bury six-month old Amanda Fanisa, asphyxiated by tear gas fired during police action, Crossroads, Cape Town, 1985* (1985) (figure 48) it is clear that 'struggle' photography tends to eclipse the personal in favour of the political. The photograph highlights the common purpose of the crowd. Several people in the crowd of mourners wear T-shirts with political slogans on them, the hand-painted grave markers say 'Crossroads' which indicates the political violence in which the victims died, and the mourners look on sadly but stoically as the tiny coffin is lowered into

the ground. The foreground of the composition is dominated by the open grave, placed diagonally across the format, in which a man stands chest deep, his hands raised to receive the coffin. The photographer has chosen a low-angle shot so that his viewpoint is looking up from the grave towards the crowd. The overcoded documentary image reinforces the didactic public message.

In Kurgan's work, however, the emphasis is on the personal statement rather than the political document. In this installation one is surrounded by four walls of photographs of newborn babies, expectant mothers, and mothers with babies in a hospital environment. Although a hospital is a public space, the works exude a sense of privacy and intimacy. The individual photographs are tightly composed to maximise the intimacy surrounding the birth and beginnings of a child's life. Lloyd Pollack (1998:11) comments,

> The space contains 160 photographs of mothers, exposing their pregnant bellies, nursing their offspring and undergoing examination. Her totally off-the-cuff, informal photography aims at unadorned honesty rather than aesthetic beauty. It establishes intimacy, a close rapport between viewer and the mothers, portrayed with unvarnished candour after the exhaustion of childbirth, or the trauma of miscarriage – haggard, exhausted, beaming with bliss or in extremis. There is no pose, no artful arrangement, but the visual equivalent of an investigative reporter's incisive documentary that lays conventional notions of women as earth mothers, embodiments of passivity, nature and instinct to rest.

The visual bombardment is compounded by a soundtrack of recorded comments from the women on the subject of birthing and breeding. The artist says 'The soundtrack weaves together fragments of conversation and ambient sound' (in Pollack 1988: 11). 'Fragments' is possibly the key to both the photographs and the soundtrack: the supplementary audio accompaniment is montaged over the photographs. Both camera and tape recorder have documented the events. The installation forms a fragmentary story which, in contrast to Mendal's crossroads documentary photograph, does not pretend to tell the whole story. Kurgan uses the language of documentary (black and white, 8 x 10 inch print size, the reportage style of shooting). However, by incorporating these photographs into an installation (a display of prints which have been massed together and integrated with sound) in a fine art environment, she breaks with documentary traditions. She chooses a subject, which is more likely to be

associated with a documentary subject than with art, and foregrounds important women's issues which have been marginalised in the male dominated Modernist art discourse.

Geoff Grundlingh's *Portraits: The Truth and Reconciliation in Worcester*, (1999) (figure 72), was a collaborative work between the photographer, two anthropologists and some of the victims of the apartheid legal system. These works share some of the codes of documentary – the use of high contrast black and white film, the 'struggle' subject and its narrative content, for example. Simultaneously they make reference to Postmodern art – telling the story from multiple points of view, and the single narrative rejected in favour of multiple narratives. This series records the effect of apartheid violence on a small community, Zwelethemba, outside the rural town of Worcester. The black and white photographs and text 'explore the routes by which young people became politically conscious: the painful memories held in the landscape; the curtailment of mobility and relationships; the route to exile; the injuries suffered; the manner in which people died; the ways that young people evaded the police; and the endurance of political consciousness' (Grundlingh, Reynolds and Ross 1999: 47). While *some* people photographed testified before the TRC, some did not. This fact is significant in that it alludes to the fact that many stories have not been made public through the Truth and Reconciliation process. Here the faceless mass featured in 'struggle' photography makes way for a much more personalised and intimate glimpse into the lives of apartheid survivors.

In this series more than one voice (Grundlingh, Reynolds, Ross and the sitter) tell the story, using more than one medium (text and image). In the portrait of Nokwanda Tani, for example, we see the main sitter / informant Nokwanda on the left, sharply in focus in the foreground. On the right in the background, smaller and out of focus, her parents, Mr and Mrs Tani are visible. As the sitter it is her portrait and her story, which is foregrounded both visually and in the text. Her parents played a supportive rather than an active role in the struggle. The photographer and the anthropologists prioritise Nokwanda in their placing of her portrait and her words ahead of her parents. The first-person narrator (Nokwanda) is within the frame of the story of the omniscient narrator (photographer / anthropologist).

Zwelethu Mtwethwa's work (figures 73-74) also breaks with documentary while forming an extension of it. Although his photographs have some documentary qualities (the subject, the focus, framing etc.) Mtwethwa allows his sitters to pose and position themselves for the camera so they are in this sense constructed. Mthwetwa (in Lundstrom and Pierre 1998: 82) says that he does not position himself as a documentary photographer. He states: 'If you change the presentation format, the genre changes, so my images aren't necessarily documentary.' Mthwetwa (quoted in Pierre and Lundstrom 1998: 82) says:

> Photographs of informal settlements, prior to the elections in 1994, were mostly black-and-white images. The photographers weren't shooting for themselves, they were on assignment and black-and-white was used to suit the political agendas of the time. For me, these images missed a lot of the colour of informal settlements. I wanted to give some dignity back to the sitters. I wanted them to have a sense of pride, and for me, colour is a dignifying vehicle. The fact they've allowed me into their personal spaces meant that I had to dignify them.

One of the ways in which post-apartheid photography breaks with the conventions of documentary is in the use of colour. The stock social documentary image is black and white, which is meant to suggest a hard and stark kind of reality, the association of black and white with uncorrupted truth being a learnt convention. If anything, black and white photographs are more fictional and further removed from reality. Black and white, however, being formally cohesive, suits the purposes of legible narrative. In black and white photography one finds less sensual distraction than in colour, and therefore we see a binary opposition developing between the intellect and the senses. The use of black and white is also a distancing mechanism, which is meant to suggest a certain unemotional objectivity. Post-apartheid photographers in South Africa have flouted this convention and they have presented the South African township in heightened colour. Mthwetwa's photographs have the same subject as many documentary photographs of people standing in and around their homes in informal settlements, but because his photographs are in saturated colour they assume a hyperreal quality.

While Dave Southwood's exhibition *Case* (1999) (figure 75) is situated in an art photographic environment and is formally much closer to fine art than documentary, there are still some documentary elements and influences in this work. He

photographs, documents, and records bullets and shrapnel which have been extracted from human bodies. His is not the work of a forensic photographer (although these bullets were used in the forensic analysis by South African police) – the colour photographs are shot in the studio against plain white backgrounds. There is a high level of abstraction about these photographs, with the result that one is not immediately sure what these beautiful objects are when one first encounters them. These photographs question a tradition of document as objective evidence, and instead they address issues of violence in South Africa today while looking at the unexpected fascination and random beauty within violence, and the constructedness of a violent image. Here the bullets are considered coolly and dispassionately, yet not entirely scientifically. They document evidence yet they introduce ambiguity. They tell a story of violence, encouraging us to draw on all the stories of violence that we hear daily in South Africa in order to reconstruct the crime story by using the documentary evidence of the bullets we see before us. According to Chris Roper (1999: 76) 'They are also about the processes of photography, about "shooting the person."' *Case* is a subtle critique of violence and of South African documentary photography. It refuses to buy into the conventions of documentary photography and exposes the tired and timeworn subject of violence (albeit implied violence) and victims (albeit absent victims). In a new manner *Case* shows both victims and violence without using clichés and without the violation of victims that documentary usually implies. However, this does not come without a sense of irony. Roper notes that Southwood exposes 'the complex irony of our position – you'll feel as intrusive when you look at these exquisitely represented bullets and shrapnel, even though the dead bodies aren't there' (Roper: 1999: 76).

In *End of Time*, (1999) (figure 76),[13] Ractliffe also questions conventions and assumptions of documentary photography. She explains:

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[13] *End of Time* (1999) was an exhibition and installation, which took place in and on the way to the Ibis gallery in Nieu-Bethesda. It consisted of two billboards of donkeys in the landscape in the Karoo; 28 small black and white photographs called *N1 (every 100 Kilometres).* These pictures were taken at exactly 100km intervals on the N1 between Cape Town and Johannesburg), *Love's Body* (a transparency – recessed into the floor – of a half-buried and partly decomposing dog), two videos of donkeys, and several pieces of text. In an article by Alex Dodd , Ractliffe tells the story of how she arrived at this work:

> It all started three years ago when I was coming home from Cape Town to Johannesburg' (The road inventory images were taken on that journey.) Between Beaufort West and

> In this body of work, I have attempted to explore some ideas around 'the document' in ways that shift the reading away from much of the empiricism, or 'true-life' quality associated with documentary photography, towards something that demands a different – and perhaps more open – response. I wanted to engage the viewer's interpretative agency more forcefully, to create a space for association, interpretation and projection. And while I have looked at conventions in documentary and forensic photography, I have also worked with ideas around the spectral, the sequential and the spatial. In addition, I have engaged in collaborations with two writers, Mike Nicol and Brenda Atkinson, whose texts are an intrinsic part of the works presented (Ractliffe 1999: unpaginated)

Commenting on Ractliffe's work, Dodd (1999:2) observes:

> The artist is most fiery when speaking about photography in this country and the development of the documentary tradition that has been the principle here for decades. South African photography has been credited more for its realism and political functionality than for its creative clout. 'It's a very particular tradition which I think perpetuates all sorts of assumptions about what photographs are ... I'm interested in foregrounding what's outside the frame. So it's not like you look at this and it imitates the world and you think it's reality. It's not reality. Everything is a mediation, everything is about point of view – about position.'

In their catalogue essay, Bester and Pierre state that one of the curatorial intentions of *Democracy's Images* was to investigate post-1994 documentary strategy. 'The exhibition takes as its starting point South African documentary photography, but extends to the critical use of documentary practices by South African artists' (Bester and Pierre 1998: 14). It is important to note that much of the questioning of the previously monolithic social documentary tradition in South Africa is coming out of what used to be an art rather than a documentary context. This has partially to do with a fluidity of the boundaries between genres in a Postmodern situation. In post-

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Richmond I saw this carcass on the side of the road, stopped the car and there were these three dead donkeys that had been shot. I stood there looking at them and it seemed very bizarre – a really strange kind of gratuitous violence. I've always associated donkeys with the Karoo. They seemed to be a constant part of the landscape that remains innocent in the way you look at it because its unchanging.

While I was looking at them on the side of the road this car pulling a caravan came driving past. It had a blowout as it passed me. But I didn't see it. It was just this pah! Sound, like a gunshot. In that moment I felt implicated in something and I didn't know what it was, but it was like something criss-crossed in me and I felt foreign. I just became hooked on this event (Dodd: 1999).

apartheid South African photography there is much more crossover between these genres than there was previously.

The critical interrogation of and break with documentary conventions in post-apartheid photography was largely the result of exposure to global Postmodern cultural praxis. Postmodernist art and post-structuralist theory are wary of concepts of 'truth', which post-structuralists see as a construct. One of the main tenets of post-structuralism and tools for the analysis of representation (amongst other things) is the concept of deconstruction. Deconstruction is a term applied to a theory of reading which aims to 'subvert' or 'undermine' the implicit claim of a textual work to establish its own boundaries and to determine the meanings of its elements. According to this theory, no text is capable of representing determinably, far less demonstrating the 'truth' about any subject. Derrida uses the term 'deconstruction' to imply a double action: one of both disordering and rearranging. Deconstruction has a tendency towards a style, which makes use of a variety of styles or genres with the aim of an endless play of unexpected meaning. Hall (1997:5-6) notes,

> The conventional view used to be that "things" exist in the material and natural world: that is their material or natural characteristics are what determines or constitutes them; and that they have a perfectly clear meaning, outside of how they are represented. Representation, in this view, is a process of secondary importance, which enters into the field only after things have been fully formed and their meaning constituted. But since the "cultural turn" in the human sciences and social sciences, meaning is thought to be *produced* – constructed – rather than simply "found". Consequently ... representation is conceived as entering into the very constitution of things; and thus culture is conceptualised as a primary or constitutive process, as important as the economic or material "base" in shaping social subjects and historical events – *not merely a reflection of the world after the event* (Hall 1997: 5-6 [Hall's emphasis]).

Many manifestations of new critical photography which have emerged in the post-apartheid era are 'falsified documents' to use A.D. Coleman's (1979) phrase, which exploit photography's status as evidence, but also reveal its artifice. They are neither true nor false. Some record fake situations that actually took place or alter in the printing process realities documented through the lens. They foreground the fabrication of the document and the fabrication of the truth, whereas in old style documentary evidence of fabrication is suppressed or edited out. Contemporary

photographs often still deal with important social issues, but in a more deconstructive and analytical way. The purpose is to show the slippery and not absolute notion of truth. In such works fabrication is foregrounded, with the possibility for multiple meanings, multiple readings and erosion of the previously fixed codes and conventions of documentary. As a reaction against the authoritative language of realism, many photographers are attempting to open up the documentary discourse through the use of fiction or subjective forms of storytelling. One no longer has to choose between what is true and false. The idea is to tell a story. The new photography of the post-1990 period adopts more fluid, fragmented, opaque narrative modes than the more traditional style documentary of the 20th century.

Modernist documentary sets out to expose or reveal an 'objective' reality or truth that is believed to exist beyond the subjective viewer. Postmodernism, on the other hand, questions whether reality exists at all. In Modernist documentary traditions there was an emphasis on the authenticity of the photograph and its truthfulness to the event represented. Jo Ractliffe's *End of Time* (1999), subverts the idea of 'truth', 'facts' and 'authenticity' to show a 'reality' which need not exist.

> Evidence – the forensic document – is central to the conceptual sense of *End of Time*. The images of the road in N1, as with the large title image of the dead donkey, set themselves up as proof of an act of violence not witnessed, but imagined. Three donkeys found dead next to the road become one dead donkey, imaged in a photograph. In the absence of information, of 'hard facts,' of 'truth,' there is only conjecture and projection. The events leading to death are reconstructed in a text written in the mode of investigative prose; the writer Mike Nicol – assumes the persona of a genre novelist presenting as fact the fiction of a violent annihilation that consummated an ancient political hatred. Despite their conventional link with authenticity, the images are as incapable as the text of translating the cause or meaning of the event. The event is missed: in the compulsively grabbing shots of the N1 (these are documents of absence), in the large black-and-white image of the single dead donkey (its circumstances are occult, its death devoid of helpful forensic signs) ... In *End of Time* the documentary photograph, no matter what guises it takes on, is incapable of arresting a single tangible moment ... (Atkinson 1999: unpaginated).

In *Truth Games* (1998) (figure 77) Sue Williamson comments on the complexity of the recording of 'truth'. This work – a partially photographic interactive installation – allows the audience to move various pieces of the text around (and create their own narrative). The viewer is able to formulate her own story by using the triggers

provided by the artist. Thus text can eclipse photograph and visa versa. Viewers reconstruct and deconstruct their own histories. We see fragments of photographs, pieces of reports from the newspaper. It is precisely this allusion to, yet inability to reveal the whole that Williamson shows. This foregrounds the failure of the recorder of history (the narrator) to record a complete history. Here a story that is being retold is retold after an event which had not been revealed at the time it occurred. In the retelling instead of *one* truth being revealed, *several* truths are alluded to and exist simultaneously.

Like Williamson's *Truth Games,* Ractliffe's *Bridges for Baldessari,*[14] (1996) (figure 78) demands active viewer participation. In documentary images the viewer is positioned as a privileged viewer looking through a window on the world at a truth being revealed. What we see though this documentary window is displayed in a clear and expositional way. In post-apartheid, Postmodern photography, viewing is frustrated and complicated for the viewer. In Jo Ractliffe's *Bridges for Baldessari*, the horizontal bands divide the picture plane up into quarters; allow the viewer a partially blocked voyeuristic and fragmented slice of vision. The shape is reminiscent of looking through a posting slot in a door or like cinema screens from which Baldessari's images are culled in the first place. There are screens in the picture and screens laid down over the picture, which are cumulative and repetitive. The temporal extension becomes conflated into several synchronous moments (like overlays) revealing different aspects of the subjects not as they develop over time, but as they coexist at the same temporal moment. The smaller blocks within again are divided in half. All these pictures have been cropped tight to suggest the existence of a larger reality 'behind' the surface. The blockage and confinement suggest windows or peepholes that simultaneously reveal and conceal internal worlds. The photograph/ picture is no longer a window on the world in which a single clear message is revealed.

[14] Baldessari works with images which are already appropriated and cut up. Here Ractliffe uses his images as building blocks for her own pictures. This is another assault on the photograph and on Baldassari's recreated narrative, and Ractliffe restructures and recomposes to her own pictorial ends. *Bridges for Baldessari* is a picture about pictures, a meta-picture, and a picture within a picture and about a picture.

In Minette Vari's video, *Alien* shown at the exhibition *Democracy's Images* (1998) (figure 79), three amorphous aliens sit at a table with bottles of mineral water and neat rows of glasses, name tags, microphones and notepads. The table is constructed to remind us of the TRC, yet her work, like the packaged images on news reports, is taken from life but is not 'real life'.

> Television frames events and crops meaning, animating world affairs in a very particular way. Translated into the narrative of news and sent all around the world, these images become quite detached from their origin – almost alien. That is why the figures in the video seem so bizarre and distorted. They speak of the discomfort of an ill-fitting interpretation. In my failure to fit into their forms I become misshapen, yet remain recognisable. My project is about reclaiming these images, re-inscribing the narrative (Vari interviewed in Bester and Pierre 1998: 68).

In the same oblique way Vari's digitally manipulated video is based on photography and yet can no longer be defined as photography. The digital manipulation calls into question the future of South African documentary photography, because digital photographs can be manipulated more seamlessly than ever before. The digital manipulations in this work, which interrogates documentary, hint at the fictionality of the 'truthful' documentary recording of the past.

In Postmodern practice it is acknowledged that nothing is true and everything is constructed. Postmodern photographs therefore acknowledge their lack of authenticity by openly quoting, plagiarising, copying and appropriating. Whereas the Modernist artwork and documentary photograph lays claim to originality, in Postmodernism the copy is acknowledged. In Minette Vari's *Zulu* (1995) (figure 80) a copy of an apartheid era tourist postcard[15] is appropriated and constructed so that the white artist has been darkened and placed alongside smiling black women in tribal dress sitting in front of a grass hut, grinding corn. This manipulation calls into question the notion of photography as truth document and evidence. Jamal and Williamson (1996: 98) comment that Vari works in 'the space between truth and untruth' and that she exposes the 'fragility of our constructs of "the real"'.

[15] Vari 'had her versions of the postcards distributed in the same way as the originals. Probably only one person in a hundred who buys the Vari version notices anything out of the ordinary' (Jamal and Williamson 1996: 101).

In Modernism there is an attempt to fix identity (in documentary and colonial photography identity is presented as innate), while Postmodernism questions the fixedness of anything. Identity is presented as fragmented, inverted, constantly being reinvented, constructed and deconstructed. Identity as a fixed construct is interrogated. In documentary photography the political imperative necessitated a clear and oversimplified distinction between oppressor and oppressed: between good and evil, black and white et cetera. This binarism is typical of colonialist / Modernist discourses. In a post-structuralist framework, however, the boundaries of identity become blurred. This is apparent in Vari's *Self-Portrait 2* (1995) (figure 81) that functions in a similar way to *Zulu*. Here Vari has used computer graphics to manipulate her photographic image so that she appears to have changed her race. Vari says: 'My concern is to uncover the overly politicised structures that secure social position in portrayals of identity and race. I present a self-portrait, but I am not the black woman in the image. My work is an inquiry into the mechanisms which contribute to the establishment and reinforcement of identity' (quoted in Jamal and Williamson 1996: 100).

During the struggle the political imperative necessitated an absolutely clear or simple identity. Photographers were obliged to choose sides. In a post-apartheid situation there has been a questioning of identity and a questioning of the 'position of committed, socially critical documentary photographers' (Dubow: 1998: 25). Dubow notes: 'What had previously been definitively polarised issues of morality with clear perceptions between oppressors and oppressed, have now become blurred in the post-apartheid society' (Dubow: 1998; 25). Goldblatt acknowledged this in 1993[16]:

> When apartheid stopped as the official policy of the state and the machinery was thrown creakingly into reverse, photographers – and others – were suddenly deprived of the central focus of their work. Whereas before there was an enemy and no one was in any doubt about the nature and identity of the enemy, there was now a confusion of forces. Previously the protagonists were clearly devisable into the bad guys and the good guys. Now they were no longer unequivocally so (Goldblatt 1998: 25).

[16] Goldblatt opened the exhibition *Through the Lens Darkly* in 1993 at the South African National Gallery and this quote was part of his speech.

In Williamson's *Truth Games* (figure 77), the artist subverts the polar opposites and binaries of documentary. The particular images that she chose to borrow from the press are those which are most familiar to us and, as a result, have gained a certain stereotypical status – anguished black faces juxtaposed with arrogant white ones. Her work is divided into three panels: on the left we see a profile close up of a black woman who we assume at first is the victim, in the middle is an unclear photograph which seems to be of a man in a suit searching for evidence at the scene of a crime, and on the right is the hard face of a white man we assume at first to be the perpetrator. By allowing the text to be moved the meaning of the work can be changed and the text can bring new meaning to the photographs. One is no longer sure if it is she or he that is a 'committed Christian' Who 'was everything' to whom? Who was 'shot execution style'? Who was 'burnt'? And who wanted 'power at any cost'? Slowly one begins to question documentary 'absolutes'. Although we may assume that the white man was the perpetrator and the black woman the victim (as this was the way it often was in the struggle), an element of doubt and confusion has been inserted by the movable text on the stereotypical figures. We can no longer be sure of an absolute truth or be assured of the documentary absolutes of good and evil, black and white, right and wrong.

If documentary meaning was closed, and functioned more like a written form of reporting, then much recent photography functions more like an oral form of storytelling. In other words texts are 'open', meaning is not fixed and is more open to multiple readings and open endings, and they are more conversational, and discursive)[17]. The Post-Structuralist claim is that the meaning of any text remains radically 'open' to contradictory readings. Barthes (1975) questioned the Structuralist attempt to force all texts into some greater narrative structure. He subverted the traditional humanistic view of literature by proclaiming the author to be dead. The

[17] Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) puts an emphasis on language and discourse as areas of social conflict, and looks at the ways in which discourse can interrupt and disrupt the authority of the single voice. In *The Problem of Dostoevsky's Poetics* he contrasts the 'monologic' novels of writers such as Tolstoy (in which according to Bahktin the voices of all characters are subordinated to the authoritative voice and controlling purpose of the author), to the dialogic or 'polysemic' form created by Dostoevsky. Dostoevsky's multileveledness was the opposite of monological experience. Bakhtin points out that the monological novel is deceitful. There is no simple closure of meaning or multilinear logic of development which the text only needs to represent. Polysemic texts argue against 'closure' or the fixing of meaning within the text.

mind of the author is described as being no more than an imputed 'space' in which the impersonal, already existing system of language, conventions, codes, and rules of combination gets precipitated into a particular written text. Bathes focused attention on the relationship between the text and the reader, who was seen as co-producer of the text, acting upon it to produce it. The reader's activity was said to mobilise signs and meanings in an individual way so that each reading would produce a different text, depending on the knowledge, skills and resources of the reader. Postmodern, post-apartheid photography generally elicits a readerly[18] investment and provides a series of questions and responses that do not erase the enigmatic character of the images but allow the reader to fill in meaning around them.

In Williamson's *Truth Games* authorship and meaning are given over to the viewer of the work, as the spectator becomes an active participant in the creation of meaning and in completing the picture.

The Modernist documentary photographer was presented as an alienated individual, often struggling with existential issues (for example, Ken Oosterbroek, Kevin Carter). The documentary photographer and the Modernist artist alike mystified the process of being a creative individual. Postmodern artists take themselves less seriously (partly because they are no longer the locus of meaning). They no longer insist on one fixed identity and adopt a Postmodernist schizophrenic authorial 'self' which is as multiple and dispersed as the visual product. The high seriousness of Modernism has been replaced by playfulness.

In the post-apartheid era there has been an interrogation of identity as a fixed construct. The absolutes established in apartheid as binary opposite categories, such as race or gender, are radically questioned. This can be seen on the cover of Jean Brundrit's *Dyke Career Calendar* (2000) (figure 82) where the artist appears twice: in a suit with a bow tie on the left, and in a dress holding a handbag on the right. The same person appearing twice in differently gendered positions points to a fluidity of gender identity.

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[18] Barthes (1975) calls a 'readerly' (*lisible*) text one which is open to inscription from the reader and encourages an analytic, rather than passive contemplative reading on the part of the viewer.

In contrast to the scarcity of the personal in favour of the collective and political in apartheid South Africa, in post-apartheid South African photography a new importance is laid on biographical inquiry.

Bester and Pierre note:

> Significantly, the collectivity, the shared sense of a struggle that was so much part of the anti-apartheid era is gone. The process of democratisation has not only afforded artists and photographers who have worked so long worked within a politics of resistance to reflect [sic] on issues of personal identity, but has also raised the notion of self-identity as crucial to politics of national identity in South Africa (Bester and Pierre: 1998:15).

In Bridget Baker's *So it Goes* (1996) (figure 83), the artist (whose father died when she was very young) has used the only photograph she has of the two of them together. It shows him teaching her to swim. This photograph is presented three times in a small tin of 'Vicks VapoRub' (a vaseline-like substance, which is used to put on the chests of sick children to soothe them). The photographs become increasingly blurred in each tin as more of this substance is added on top 'with the photo of Baker and her father sinking progressively deeper and deeper to the bottom' (Jamal and Williamson 1996: 125). These photographs are very personal but according to Jamal and Williamson (1996: 124) the artist 'avoids the dangerous trap of sentimentality through the tough vision and direct approach' towards her subject. Whereas in the struggle era autobiography and subjectivity were suppressed because of a pressure to deal with the socio-political, in a post-apartheid era the personal, the specific and the biographical are open to artists as areas of inquiry.

The personal and openly subjective angle is one that is apparent in the spoken, written and visual narratives of Jo Ractliffe. Her collaboration on *End of Time* with writers Mike Nicol and Brenda Atkinson is an extension of her personal narrative[19].

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[19] In *End of Time* text is not used to anchor or explain the photographs, but rather to complicate their narratives further. Here she also encourages a narrative reading of the work, including texts while at the same time refusing to fix the narrative meaning. Texts authored by Ractliffe herself, Brenda Atkinson and Mike Nicol exist parallel to the photographs. Where does the true story lie? In Nicol's or Atkinson's text or in the photographs themselves?

> 'I was interested in personal narratives in terms of my own compulsion around longing and loss,' says Ractliffe ...'and especially in terms of landscape and memory. That thing of not feeling at home in the world in a particular way. Always suspended in some kind of doubt about what you can claim as yours or your history here or where you fit in (Dodd: 1999).

Ractliffe's work, *Love's Body,* is an installation of a light box/transparency, which has been recessed into the ground. The transparency is according to the artist 'at once spectral and material' (1999: unpaginated). She says that transparency implies 'to let the light not on, but in or through. To look not at the text but through it; to see between the lines ...' Although this is a single and extremely iconic, picture even here there is reference to layering and fragment, both in terms of medium (layers of light and film) and subject (dog decomposing and fragmenting and only partly revealed), 'The true body is a body broken' (1999: unpaginated).

Despite its customary understanding as moving forwards in time, chronology can only be determined by looking backwards and in retrospect, after one is in a position to plot the trajectory of the past. Walter Benjamin describes the past as a photographic plate waiting to be irradiated by a posthumous flash of recognition or to be developed by chemicals of the future. Narrating the past by the nature of its being past always has a fictive element it. History is rediscovered as a source for fictions of identity and subjectivity.

In 'The Storyteller' Benjamin investigates the history of literary forms. What makes this analysis distinct from others is the histiographic dimension opened up by its treatment of narrative genres as embodiments of different kinds of memory. Memory creates the causal chains of tradition and history. Benjamin suggests:

> Memory is the epic faculty par excellence. Only by virtue of a comprehensive memory can epic writing absorb the course of events on the one hand and with the passing of these make peace with the power of death on the other (Benjamin quoted in Osborne: 1994: 80).

Ractliffe's *Love's Body* is a piece where:

> The photograph wants something back, without giving up the ghost. It can convey the auretic quality of the lost object, while bringing that object into culture, across the reality principle, to within the parameters of sanctified

> mourning. Uncertain of its own narrative, full of desire yet clinging to the sign, the photograph fails as a souvenir (1999: unpaginated).

Part of the Postmodern fascination with personal narratives, memory and the (re)writing of history, flows from a desire to hear the suppressed voices of the past. The post-colonial awareness that it is virtually impossible to speak for others has meant that South African photography in the post-apartheid era is moving away from speaking for others, in favour of finding ways that might enable people to speak for themselves. There has been a move towards locating a multiplicity of voices in a continuing dialogue, to replace the authoritarian voice of the documenter.[20] The 'taking' of human subjects by a photograph is a concrete social encounter, often between a damaged, victimised, and powerless individual and a relatively privileged observer who acts as the eye of power and the agent of a social, political or journalistic institution. Post-apartheid photography allows social issues to be presented from the point of view of members of the group or social issue that is being recorded.

Photographers such as Mustafa Maluka highlight the right of individuals to construct their *own* identities. In Maluka's photographs on the exhibition *Staking Claims* (1999) (figure 84), the subject is the object. In these self-portraits, taken at different locations in Cape Town, the photographer photographs himself at arm's length in different environments. His arms are raised towards the camera as he holds it and are included within the frame. Here we see his point of view (which significantly is 180 degrees different to that of the camera). Maluka's fairly bland snap-shot-like photographs are to some degree dependent on their individual titles (for example, *Malawi squatter Camp, Bishop Lavis* or *Garden's, Cape Town*) for the reading of these images. In these photographs he is both object and subject. He constructs the story of his own identity in different environments, reinventing himself (changing hats and hairstyle)

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[20] When we read photo stories we often forget that there is a teller. In traditional documentary the photographer / journalists' role in the recording and telling of the story is effaced and the story is presented as if it were some kind of a privileged window on the world, and the biases inherent in documentary photography are unacknowledged. In fact, in photography the story is presented in the text through the mediation of some 'prism', 'perspective' or 'angle of vision' or 'point of view' which is shown by the narrator / photographer. Documentary photographers who claim to deal with 'fact' or 'truth' are not necessarily speaking in their own voice. They may be projecting themselves physically and psychologically into the space of others. Roland Barthes observes: 'The one *who speaks* (in the narrative) is not the one *who writes* (in real life) and the one *who writes* is not the one *who is*' (Barthes in Brannigan 1992: 87).

according to his context. He thus looks at the rigid classifications (racial, political, religious) of the past and presents identity as flexible, transient and fundamentally fluid. Although they are amusing these images are in many ways a fairly easy and superficial analysis of the racial, political and religious issues of the past.

Postmodern, post-apartheid photography not only encourages people to represent themselves but also sustains a multiplicity of voices that blend and clash and contradict one another. In the post-apartheid situation people are aware that there is more than one story which can be told from more than one point of view. History, identity and self are in a process of reinvention and the single linear narratives and positions of the past are being replaced by histories, stories and identities that are multiple and dispersed.

Charlton and Rankin-Smith (1999: unpaginated) contend that:

> Histories and memories and the events that shaped conflict and reconciliation provide catalysts for memorising, questioning, reclaiming and understanding the past. The complex relationship between collective recollection and individual testimony provide fertile ground for creative exploration, as does the tension between official and personal memory: whose version will be remembered and how? Artists use the fragmentary nature and distortions of memory, its myths, legends and dreams, glimpses and phrases to generate imagery and provide stimuli that pose questions and offer interpretation and analysis.

Documentary photography perpetuates (inadvertently) a colonialist-Modernist discourse. History is presented as a single narrative which is clear, expositional, continuous, homogenous and centred, and it insists on one interpretation. In post-structuralist, Postmodernist readings of history the text should invite multiple and endless interpretation. Whereas the structuralist view was that in the analysis of culture one could isolate central structures (grand narratives), post-structuralism instead allows for a multitude of structures or smaller meta-narratives. The Postmodern vision of history is decentred and dispersed. It views time differently. It views narrative differently.

Lyotard (1979) identifies a split in the fields of painting and literature. On the one hand he places those who refuse to re-examine the rules of art and pursue successful careers in mass conformity (for example 'traditional' documentary photography). They communicate by means of the 'correct rules' and reinforce the endemic desire for reality. On the other hand are writers and artists who question the rules of the visual and narrative arts. They are incredulous of reality. Postmodernism refuses to posit any structure, what Lyotard calls a master narrative, such as art or myth. It argues that such models are indeed attractive, perhaps even necessary, but this does not make them any less illusory. For Lyotard, Postmodernism is characterised by exactly this kind of incredulity towards master or meta-narrative. The Postmodern condition posited by Lyotard, with its fragmentation and decentring, can be seen to be a radical new epitome rather than the culmination of a process at work within popular culture. Lyotard asserts that the 'grand narratives' have disappeared.

Minette Vari's *Alien* (1998) (figure 85) foregrounds the fictionality of grand narratives. She questions the constructedness and artificiality of a set of stories, reconstituting the televised and documented. In an interview (Bester and Pierre: 1998: 68) Vari makes reference to the way that South Africa is reported on in the international media. Her 'aliens' carry cameras, gas masks and batons. Groups of spectators mill about, watching, while a press photographer runs towards the foreground.

Bester and Pierre comment on Minette Vari's use of 'struggle imagery' and visual iconography of the past, noting the following:

> In her video *Alien*, Vari physically inserts herself into animated sequences, like an actor on a stage, rewriting and recycling apartheid history. She manipulates the archive by placing herself in the midst of the struggle, all the time questioning the authenticity of both the documentary image and the writing of history itself. We have seen so many of these images before; we are familiar with them, with their clichéd visions. Vari becomes the maker and the made, the photographer and the photographed, using simulacra to question representational acts (1998: 16).

Documentary photography shows 'reality' from a single point of view. Post-apartheid Postmodern photography acknowledges that there is no one point of view and no fixed position and no one narrative.

Sue Williamson's *A Tale of Two Cradocks* (1994) (figure 86), is unlike Julian Cobbing's documentary photograph (figure 23) taken in 1986. Cobbing's photograph (which is included in Williamson's work) shows history from a single point of view. Williamson's work retells history from multiple, juxtaposed and changeable points of view. Its narrative strategy is one of allowing the viewers to tell their own story. This is foregrounded by the way the work functions sculpturally, inviting the spectator to view, from different angles, two diametrically opposed stories of the Eastern Cape town of Cradock. One is the official story told via the tourist brochures echoing the official Nationalist point of view, the other showing the story of Mathew Goniwe and his part in the struggle.

Another work which demonstrates this multiple point of view, is Doris Nkosi's video (co-authored by her son Mfeli Nkosi and produced by Msizi Kulane[21]). In *Ghetto Diaries* (1988)[22] (figure 87) we see an exploration of the life of a black woman and her son. Here ordinary people, who learned to use the video camera, show and document their environments and circumstances. The mother and son film their own responses and thoughts. These two narratives are dovetailed and interspersed so that they enrich and supplement one another. As Kurgan notes in her catalogue essay for *Bringing up Baby* (1997), which featured this video, 'Their footage is woven together in the form of a visual letter, which speaks of their mutual longing' (1997: 3). The shared story of their communal narrative is fluid rather than fixed. Doris Nkosi, a domestic worker, films her working life, which includes looking after a white baby, while she is separated from her own child. The story of the life of her son in rural KwaZulu-Natal runs parallel to hers and was recorded by him. The sharp contrasts between the wealthy suburban white life and the boy's life in a rural area are played out against one another. Nkosi's camera enables her to reverse the power differential

[21] There is some question as to who controls the narrative here: was it that Doris Nkosi and her son were simply telling their story, or was it to some degree a narrative which was controlled by the producers who commissioned and edited it?

[22] This work was conceived as a television documentary, which was produced by Msizi Kulane as part of a *Mail and Guardian* television series, called *Ghetto Diaries*.

that distinguishes her from her employers, and it enables her to assert her story or her 'truth' over her employers. Hers is a look that insists on difference and interconnection, on conflict and commonality. It invokes a familial gaze but one that is complicated by the very notion of the family and has radically reframed and opened up its boundaries, because the gaze is internal yet external.

Commenting on Nkosi's video, Msizi Kulane (1997: 20) states,

> I was attracted to the theme in Doris and her son's story by the mere fact that the life of the domestic worker is one of the least told stories of isolation and vulnerability. A woman is in this instance forced by circumstances to abandon her own kids to look after someone else's. It is also a story of kids who have learned to live with this abnormality as a natural way of life.

Multiple narratives are more inclusive and flexible than the single narratives of Modernist documentary. If Modernism was ideological at heart, full of dictates about what art could and could not be, Postmodernism is more eccentric and willing to include wider visual practices. This extends not only to the boundaries between the genres in photography (art, documentary etc) but also the boundaries between disciplines (painting, sculpture etc). In post-apartheid South African photography we see people who have traditionally been painters or sculptors working with photography or alternatively working with a combination of painting and photography (Siopis), or with photo sculpture (Searle).

While Modernism denied literary links and insisted on its autonomy, Postmodernism affirms these links to other areas, genres and disciplines. Post-apartheid, Postmodern photographs are not viewed as autonomous. The emphasis in Postmodern photography has been on the ensemble, and not on the formal or semantic success or failure of the single image (Sekula: 1984: xi). According to Allan Sekula (1984: xi) 'this seemed the only reasonable way to shift photography away from its affiliations with painting and printmaking and toward an investigation of its shared and unshared ground with literature and cinema.'

The term 'intertextuality'[23] is used to signify the multiple ways in which any one literary text echoes, informs or is linked to, other texts, whether by open or covert allusions or by the assimilation of the formal and substantive features of an earlier text, or simply by participating in a common stock of literary and linguistic procedures and conventions. In its most radical formulation any text is regarded as an 'intertext' constituted by an intersection of other texts, past and future.[24] The intertext depends on the notion that in a space of a given text several utterances from other texts can intersect and neutralise or explain one another. A reader can undo this process and 'run' the threads of meaning back across all the text from which a given text was formed. Hence there is a perpetual multiplication of meaning, which is polyvalent and multi-determined.

Jean Brundrit's *Valued Families* (1995) (figure 88) makes use of text and image, but in this case the text is not an addition to the image but rather part of the image itself. Brundrit's *Valued Families* is selenium toned black and white photographic print with the subject of two naked women's torsos (cropped at the head and legs). Superimposed on top of the original soft-focus tonal pinhole photograph is a document of interconnecting names resembling a family tree. This work embeds an intertextual discourse in the photograph by its inclusion of text and the sets of interconnections it creates. One reads the text while reading the photograph through the text. Our looking at the text is interrupted by the photograph, which demands to be

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[23] Intertextuality is linked to Jacques Derrida's (1973) concept of 'difference.' This concept is extracted from the French word *différance*, implying to 'differ' and 'defer.' This suggests that words/ texts/ artworks always differ from (have a kind of autonomy) and defer to other words/ texts and artworks. Words/ texts /artworks always trace, and are connected to, other words and sounds and always point to other possible meanings. Meaning derives in part from its internal organisation but also from its dependence on an interdiscursive network of social and cultural discourses. The movement or replacement of one trace with another and then with another is a process that allows no final or central meaning. Meaning instead lies in the difference of one against the other. The text opens continuously into other texts. It calls on other bodies of knowledge.
Derrida regards texts as free play with signs and he uses the word text to imply a differential network, a fabric of traces, references, endlessly referring to something other than itself to other differential traces. Texts are no longer stable autonomous objects, but a network of references which implies that no word or picture can stand on its own but includes all pictures and combinations of pictures that make up the text as well as other texts. The autonomy and independence of the single artwork, as well as the understanding of the authentic one are challenged.

[24] Photography is by its nature an intertextual medium. In the spool of the camera past, present and future reside simultaneously and latently on the film. In the contact sheet we witness unrelated spaces and stories finding themselves close together on a sheet of paper, which forces them to refer to one another visually across their black frames.

looked at first. As readers we have to read between levels of narration and soon we become aware that there is more than one level of focalisation. A degree of mirroring goes on between the linguistic and the photographed components of the narrative, and the single photograph gains momentum through the technique of layering which creates a multi-layered structure of different tones and textures when the photograph is combined with the text. One is aware of an alternative family tree or family history being represented which explains the interconnectedness of the group and the individuals within it. This 'family tree' is superimposed on the body. The body is viewed through the grid of a collective history. This history is apparent, yet transparent. Here two systems of understanding the world, the visual and the written are viewed through one another. Crimp states: 'The picture underneath has more to do with Derrida's grammatology: the notion that another sign always already articulates the sign' (Crimp in Foster 1984: 197). Crimp speaks of 'strata of representation' (Crimp in Foster 1984: 196). He says: 'Underneath each picture there is always another picture' (Crimp in Foster 1984: 196). According to Foster, in images like these 'artistic modes may be transposed, generic signs or types collided, so that aesthetic limits are transgressed' (Crimp in Foster 1984: 196).

Montage,[25] as an aesthetic practice in which combinations occur, reoccur, overlap and leak into one another, is arguably the clearest form of intertextuality in photography. Montage allows for permutation, repetition, indication, multiple comings and goings and repositioning of the subject to occur. There is a preference in Postmodern philosophy and practice for montage, collage, the cut-up, and the fragmented. Jean-François Lyotard (1983:341) exhorts: 'Let us wage war on totality; let us be witness to the unpresentable.'

The role of the photographer in montage becomes that of picture editor rather than just picture taker. The Postmodern artist is often seen to take on the role of editor, reorganiser and reformulater of the picture plane, as is illustrated in the work of Jane Alexander and Lien Botha. Here the montage process is one of radical editing and restructuring of the original photographs. Montage subverts a documentary reality for

[25] I refer the reader back to Chapter One where I mentioned that while Modernist notions of photography influenced apartheid-era 'struggle' photography, the avant-garde branch of Modernism affected post-apartheid photography.

a hyperreality[26]. In montage we can see multiple points of view; we see simultaneously with more than one set of eyes. Jane Alexander's photomontages make reference to past and present simultaneously. Alexander appropriates pre-existing and ready-made images in combination with her own. Many of Alexander's montages, for example, *Triumph over Capitalism: Lustgarten* (1995) (figure 89) contain specific references to German art and history yet they are conflated on top of references to South African history, for example, *Portrait of a man with landscape and procession (Bantu Steve Biko 1946-1977* (1995) (figure 90). Alexander's works seem to be formally and conceptually connected to the montage of John Heartfield, one of the earliest deconstructors of the photographic image. We have a clash of temporal and spatial zones. Photographs which have been culled from a different time and space co-exist, creating dialogue. The appropriated images work to break down, decode and deconstruct an amalgam of different image types with their own set of associations and resonances.

Ractliffe's *Nadir* (1986-8) (figure 91) series of montaged photolitho prints are of interest particularly with regard to point of view. Initially they have the look of one

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[26] By juxtaposing elements that are naturally strange to one another new relationships are formed. Different realities are revealed. Montage defamiliarises. Victor Shklovsky, the formalist critic, coined the term 'defamiliarisation,' when he charged the critic with the task of discarding worn out meanings for fresh ones. Shklovsky stated that the role of art was to defamiliarise or estrange signs that had become dull and invisible through habit. The role of art was to subvert the 'ordinary' language of habitual perception and replace it with the strangeness of poetic language, which draws attention to its own formal features and the distinctive features which make it an artwork.

As a formalist Shklovsky believed that the primary aim of art was in foregrounding its meaning. To do this, art has to disrupt the ordinary modes of discourse. Art makes strange the world of everyday perception and renews the viewer's capacity for fresh sensation. The foregrounded properties or 'artistic devices', which estrange art, are often a *deviation* of the processes of ordinary vision. In visual art these deviations take the form of a visual alienation. The work of art interrupts ordinary looking. In critical theory and in his own writings Brecht rejected what he referred to as the "Aristotelian" concept of a tragic play as the imitation of reality that had a unified plot and universal theme. Brecht proposes instead that the illusion of reality should be deliberately shattered by use of an episodic plot, by emphasising theatricality and by other estrangement effect (a *vervreemdings* effect).

Roman Jakobson later elaborated on Shklovsky's theories when he spoke about poetic language. According to Jakobson, deviations consist primarily of patterns in the sound and synthesis of poetic language – that is repetitions, balance and contrast in speech sounds, rhythm, rhyme, stanza form – and also of patterned recurrences of key words or images. Repetitions of pictures minimise their peculiarity, but enable them to become units, part of an overall picture. The 'montage' is no longer *a* picture and few of the pictorial aesthetics can be applied to it as an individual object. Here it loses its identity as such and becomes a detail of an assembly, an essential structural element of the whole, which is that thing itself. In this concatenation of its separate but inseparable parts, a photographic 'montage' can become at once the most potent weapon and the most tender poem.

point renaissance perspective, but on closer inspection we see the works are a composite of various points of view. There is no longer a centre of consciousness capable of looking out onto a world and apprehending its structure but rather a multiple and anonymous consciousness and shifting points of view. As photo-collages they combine diverse representations and 'yet the disparate parts make up a coherent picture: scenes of apocalyptic metropolitan landscapes inhabited by dogs sniffing at the debris of the ruin' (Siopis: 1997: unpaginated). The terms of place are changing, particularly in South Africa. Spaces that have located people are breaking down. There is a fraying of previously delineated places. In *Nadir* we see several barren landscapes with prowling guard dogs signalling the uncertainties of demarcations within space. Here, montage and point of view operate formally as metaphors for relocation, displacement and alienation, and the work operates in a different way to proto-cubist collage, which fragments one site. In *Nadir* a number of places are made into a new unchartable environment, a foreign yet familiar place.

Ractliffe works with montage in an Eisensteinan[27] sense in *reShooting Diana* (1995) (figures 92-93). Here the artist took on the role of a film director. There is a sense of 'the enveloping and multi-layered experience of watching cinematic flashes of life' (Jamal and Williamson 1996: 76). These photographs give one the impression of film stills in their arrested movement. Their use of metonymic fragments, as well as the grainy soft-focus presentation, give them the look of old family films. The subjects reinforce this: hallucinatory landscapes, commonplace objects, and domestic environments. These photographs are like the stills from an amateur home movie

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[27] In film, montage means editing. Montage has come to be used to refer to the splicing together of a sequence of shots. Sergi Eisenstein (1898 – 1948) was particularly involved in forming a theory of montage. Eisenstein's first production for the theatre in 1923 was not organised in acts but as a programme of attractions, as in the circus. In the vaudeville environment unrelated acts and events were juxtaposed. In his manifesto first published in *Lef*, he outlined his concept of the 'montage of attractions' (Wollen 1972:21). He called his method units of impression combined into one whole (Wollen 1972: 48). The idea of montage was possibly inherited from the photomontages of Alexander Rodshenko and George Grosz and Raoul Haussmann. Haussmann called his process photomontage because he said it embodied the Dadaist refusal to play the part of the artist. They regarded themselves as engineers and their work as construction. They assembled (in French *monter*) their work like fitters (Wollen 1972:32). During the 1920s Eisenstein's theory of montage developed and he began to replace the idea of attractions with that of stimuli, or shocks. In 1925 Eisenstein (in Wollen: 1972: 39) wrote: 'The science of shocks and their montage in relation to these concepts should suggest their form. Content, as I see it, is a series of connecting shocks arranged in a certain sequence and directed at the audience'. This dialogical and oppositional quality of montage is possibly what makes it appropriate to the telling of multiple stories, particularly in a post-apartheid South African context.

where the montage elements are not cuts that have been made by a movie editor but rather 'in camera' as one family member after another gets the opportunity to wield the filmic apparatus. Like the amateur filmmaker's 'in camera' editing there are all the mistakes, blurs and smudges one would anticipate seeing, for example if someone left the camera on after filming. According to Jamal and Williamson, Ractliffe wanted to 'challenge the conventional "frozen moment" ethos of photography and explore its potential for a more filmic tool in recovering memory and imaging experience' (Jamal and Williamson 1996: 74).

Marxist critic, Machery, proposes that a literary text not only distances itself from its ideology by its fiction and form, but also reveals the contradictions inherent in that ideology by its silences or gaps. Such textual absences are symptoms of repression within the text of it own unconsciousness. Machery asserts that these silences speak, and so he argues that in order to make explicit the conscious intentions of the author we must always investigate the silences of the text, for the things the text cannot say and the significant absences of the text (Macherey in Woolf 1984: 65-66). In narratives, both verbal and visual, it is not just presences but absences which have importance.

Composite works such as Ractliffe's *reShooting Diana* makes use of the power in the suspension of the sequence with techniques of interruption. The blank contests the inevitability of every ending as fulfilment or completion, tangling the storyline just where classical narration would have provided the satisfaction of closure or resolution. It is not only about what can be observed in these pictures but to what is not in them, all the absent 'befores and afters' and 'in betweens' and 'could have beens.'[28]

This idea is realised in Ractliffe's installation *reShooting Diana* (1995), which consists of fifty large black and white photographs *and the spaces between them*. The

[28] In composite photography, the gaps or spaces between the photographs become nearly as laden as the photographs themselves, for it is in this space that the viewers construct their own narrative or meaning. It is no longer merely about presences but absences as well. This interval, spacing, gap or fissure is the site of true creativity for the viewers, when having received the triggers from what goes before they construct their own narratives, deciding for themselves what stories link the photographs, which may juxtapose things and experiences of a different and often incongruous nature.

photographs are presented with their backs facing one another and are sandwiched between glass. They hang from a structure above. The photographs are grainy and in soft focus and they show fragmentary scenes and objects. These images combine to produce a single picture, a kind of 'being with' that results in a metamorphosis rather than a development or comparison or any other form of being beside.[29] The photographs in the two middle rows are too close for the viewer to be able to see the pictures from a distance. This metamorphosis is compounded by the glare from the top lighting. The photographs reflect on one another both literally and figuratively and, at this point, there is a visual intersection that interrupts the linear flow.

Traditionally when we visualise narrative we expect to see time to be ordered chronologically and to be causal. In Postmodern narratives there may be a beginning, middle and end, but not necessarily in that order. The story can become multilinear rather than unilinear. Postmodern, post-apartheid photography, then acknowledges that the linear chronology of conventional photo stories is neither the natural nor the actual character of most stories. In traditional photo documentary, narrative structure relies on codes. The conventional photo story uses the conventional 'norm' of chronology and tries to replace the actual multilinear temporality of the story and to confer on it a pseudo-natural status[30]. Jamal and Williamson (1996:76) suggest that Ractliffe's work is concerned largely with the idea of narrative.

> Structurally, narrative is also a time-bound and artificial form. We are told a story. We are given a beginning, middle, and an end. And yet, as in all forms, there are variations. Ractliffe's concern is *not to tell a story but to invoke one.* By resisting narrative sequence and skewing the ways the images are

[29] The work was hung in five rows which face each other and only the front and back rows face outwards.

[30] It is generally accepted that narratives are implied by sequences. An implied story develops when one sets up a chronological progression, and much cluster, composite and montage imagery is caught up in the same concerns. The eye moves across it, scans it, makes sense of it, and creates a story from its clues and suggestions. The relationship or proximity between different, sometimes unrelated images sets up communicative relationships between them. Once communication exists the tendency is to try and read them as a whole, and to try and figure out a story. With sequential photographic narrative like documentary photography very little effort or imagination is required from the viewer; the story is presented as a complete, closed text, but in Postmodern cluster, collage and montage, photographs behave differently. Here readers are given suggestions and asked to fill in the gaps for themselves. Postmodern photography foregrounds mechanisms which turn back on themselves. In montage, for example, we can experience past, present and future in one moment of time as we see front/back and sides in one space, and this represents not closure but rupture, and the collapse of linear history.

> juxtaposed, Ractliffe disrupts the intended flow of meaning. Thus the narrative is never given; it is made (my italics).

In Modernist documentary practice the picture aims to tell the whole story. The picture is self-sufficient and autonomous. In Postmodernism the notion that 'every picture tells a story' is replaced by 'every picture tells a thousand stories'. In documentary there is often one message and it is didactic. In Postmodern art there is usually a discourse, an equal conversation which is discursive, playful and sometimes contradictory. Lately the presumed impossibility (or irrelevance) of producing a systematic flow has led to remodelling forms and recasting the genres of fiction. Since Modernism there has been a destruction of 'story' in literature and the abandonment of a linear plot. This is also true for visual narrative.

The Modernist documentary image was presented as being rooted in a particular time, and yet as timeless in an attempt to appeal to the universal conscience of viewers. The photographs were meant to stand as monuments to history. The documentary image attempts to be revealing but it shows only a very specific slice of time and place as it frames events. The Postmodern photograph acknowledges the frame and alludes to other narratives continuing in time and space on either side of the photograph.

In Jo Ractliffe's work *N1 (every hundred kilometres)* from *End of Time* (1998) (figure 94), 28 photographs are shown. These are taken at exactly 100km intervals on the N1 while travelling between Johannesburg and Cape Town and back again. The photographs have the randomness of drive-by shooting. There is a sense of disengagement about images shot from the wheel of a moving car, because the photographer has not entered into the landscape[31]. These photographs are almost, but not exactly repetitive. Although they are arranged chronologically they give a sense of cyclical time. These are narrative units in which picture narratives deal with time lapse. There is a sense that an event will recur repeatedly, the sameness of its reoccurrence overriding any differences in the configurations of its return.

The notion of 'return' relative to a photograph's time and space is an idea central to photographic tradition, but in Postmodernist practice it takes on different

connotations, being no longer a question of a photograph's captured essence, or what Barthes calls 'punctum' in *Camera Lucida* (1990). We are not offered the return of the particular past moment when a specific subject was in front of the camera. Instead we are presented with a sense of continuity. Ractliffe offers us almost a loop of images, which is more reminiscent of video than still photography.

The examples discussed indicate that there has been a radical shift in photographic practice from the apartheid era to the post-apartheid era. Colin Richards (1991: 103) acknowledged this shift from apartheid 'struggle' imagery to a more creative post-apartheid practice in 1991 as follows:

> In facing down apartheid culture the culture of resistance has often been able to glance at a more imaginative future out of the corner of its eye. It has had little choice. Its struggle has mostly been to *create* conditions for creativity. It has seldom created those conditions itself. The challenge now is how to begin to realise what has only been glimpsed through the fissures in the finally failing white nationalist hegemony. This process has begun. While the cultural struggle continues across a broad front, its terms appear to be shifting: shifting from the demands of combat to those of self-determination, from strategies of boycott and confrontation to those of critical engagement.

With the demise of apartheid the documentary imperative to record was given less prominence. In its place a diverse and complex critical practice has emerged which radically questions many of the notions that defined documentary photography. This new practice has raised new debates and dialogues with the past and future in terms of the photograph as medium and how it is interpreted.

[31] One photograph is not of the road. This image marks the spot in which the artist found three dead donkeys. In this photograph the viewer sees a shot of the ground.

CHAPTER THREE:

DISCUSSION OF THE PRACTICAL WORK

In this thesis I have focused on the emergence of a critical practice in post-apartheid South African photography. This critical practice has manifested itself, in my practical work, in an interrogation and deconstruction of the language of South African documentary photography, particularly the social documentary practice of the late 1970s to early 1990s. As a photographer my visual and theoretical research is aimed at locating a photographic identity in relation to a photographic past that was dominated by the traditions of social documentary.

The practical component of my research comprises two parallel bodies of work. The larger body, which I term the *Deconstructed Documents*, deals with the public political arena, while the smaller series, *Displacing Disability*, negotiates an interior and private space. The point of connectedness is that they both stem from a desire to explore an alternative language for photographing, while still making reference to documentary traditions and conventions. More importantly, from a theoretical perspective, they testify to the fact that I have chosen to work with a Postmodern erosion of the consistency that characterised Modernism. I have not sought to present one cohesive unit of images, but rather to acknowledge two different explorations. These confirm that creative identity is always comprised of public and private dimensions.

DECONSTRUCTED DOCUMENTS

The 'documentary' body of work consists of two components. The first comprises several composite works (*Arrested Moments*, *Framing the Shadow*, *Bang-Bang Shots*, *Press Stud* and *Watching the Watcher*), which examine the reframing of traditional documentary 'struggle' photographs. The second unit is a series of large digital prints (*Framing Documentary*) which investigate the constructions of the documentary image.

I position my work as Postmodernist in the sense that it involves a self-conscious process in which the original documentary image is deconstructed and reconstructed. By rephotograping 'original' documentary images from publications, I question the Modernist and documentary notions of autonomy, authenticity, and originality. I revisit these photographs in order to explore the relationship between the photographer and his subject. My lens is thus turned away from the events portrayed and focused, instead, on the photographers themselves. Thus the relationships between the photographer and the subject, and the relationship between the photographer and the viewer are foregrounded. In this way I am questioning the supposed impartiality and objectivity of the documentary photographer and the medium of photography as such.

I have rephotographed fragments of images from the struggle in order to discern the presence of the photographer (his shadow, other photographers etc). I rephotographed, cropped, distorted and reconstituted the selected image in order to question the hold of documentary images on 'truth' and history. I am in no way trying to undermine or question the political aims or achievements of documentary photographs, but rather I am aiming at uncovering and exposing the politics or strategies of representation (in documentary photography) during the apartheid era, which are the subject of my discussion in Chapter One.

Postmodern discourse raises awareness of the ideological underpinnings of conventions. American artists Sherrie Levine and Richard Prince have both set precedents in Postmodern practice which comment on the construction of photography and the subject through rephotography. In Postmodern practice there is a new freedom to quote, appropriate, borrow or undermine 'original' artworks. With Barthes' declaration that 'the author is dead' comes a movement away from the artist as originator of the work to the artist as reconstitutor and appropriator of the work. It is in this area that I would place my works. Various levels of technical mediation are involved in the process of rephotographing these images (*Arrested Moments*, *Framing the Shadow*, *Bang-bang Shots* and *Watching the Watcher*). Through rephotographing these reproductions, my photograph is six times removed from the original scene: the event, the negative, the print and the reproduction, my negative and my print, are all sites where manipulation can occur.

The printed dots, binding, reflective light and borders also draw attention to the fact that my work is a copy and not a fresh portrayal of events. The copy acknowledges the use of the image. It also questions Modernist notions of originality and authorship. I have moved from the primary role of capturer of the image to the secondary role of reconstitutor of the image. In the originals the documentary photographers were making a comment on reality, whereas in these photographs I am making commentary on *the act of representation*. To confuse this matter further, some of my originals have been inserted between the copies, for example in *Watching the Watcher*, and some of my originals are made to look as if they are copies, for example, *Press Stud*. All the photographs, however, are presented as though they are mine, and no hierarchy has been created between the other photographers' work and my own. The viewer will wonder What is true? What is fake? What is copy? What is original?

In the *Deconstructed Documents* composite works, I draw attention to the visual codes of photography, particularly social documentary. I foreground and expose some of the conventions in several ways: firstly by rephotographing some of the images very closely so that their printed dots are exaggerated, thereby exposing the mediation of the printed image[1]. The dots interfere with the documentary 'transparency' that pretends to show an unmediated 'window on the world' and instead they self-consciously draw attention to the processes by which photographs are reproduced and disseminated. I then challenge conventions by printing many of the pictures 8 x 10 on cheap plastic paper, thus making reference to the conventions of newspaper photography such as quick, inexpensive printing. Finally, by choosing to shoot in black and white, I evoke the language of social documentary in South Africa. Through exaggerating these codes and conventions I attempt to expose how the language of documentary photography (the language of 'truth') is artificial, manufactured and contrived, despite the general acceptance that the image renders truth.

[1] The exaggerated dots and grain in the print are a result of the close-up photographing of reproductions of the photographs. The dots glide in and out of focus, are foregrounded and then erased. In places they become abstracted patterns that draw attention to themselves and away from the 'event' represented.

The notion of the frame is central to my work in two ways: firstly the way the frame acts or is brought to bear on this 'window-on-reality' or 'slice of life' and secondly with regards to the interventions I make (the reframing of already existent works)[2].

In *Framing the Shadow* (catalogue figures 3-5), the frame shifts from the overt political or public event to a more covert take on documentary. This group of images are printed larger than the other composite series and consist of several rows of black and white images that largely focus on the shadows of photographers. These are usually taboo in professional practice and are associated with the amateur. As discussed in Chapter One in relation to Guy Tillim's *A pall bearer presses on through tear gas at the funeral of one of 50 people killed by "Witdoeke" vigilantes, Crossroads, Cape Town, May 1986* (1986) (figure 49), and an example of the same photograph by Peter Magubane's (figure 41 and 42) in which it is apparent that there is a shadow of a photographer in the former which has been cropped out in the latter, there is a conscious effort on the part of the documentary photographer to efface his own presence. Clues, such as shadows, which would have alerted the viewer to the presence and mediation of a photographer in the taking of the photograph, have been removed. The visible presence of the photographer calls into question the 'objective' and 'neutral' frame of documentary and reveals the fact that someone took the photograph and it is not simply a 'window-on-the world.'

To find these shadows I have searched through publications that focus exclusively or largely on 'struggle' photography, for example *Beyond the Barricades* (1989), Peter Magubane's *June 16* (1986) and *South Africa: The Cordoned Heart* (1986)[3]. Almost all of the photographs are reproduced from books of photographs of the apartheid era. Finding

[2] The device I pay particular attention to is framing as I am literally reframing a previous history and document. The metaphor of a frame suggests my decision to select information from an infinity outside the frame. The infinite multitude of forms that can be selected subverts the photographer's original frame. In *Framing the Shadow* the images are not contained entirely within the frame and in some portions of the following frame are visible and leak out of the sides. This, and the images' tight cropping, points to the fact that the documentary frame cannot purport to show an entire 'event', 'history' or 'truth'. That which has been left out of the frame is thus emphasised.

[3] The photographs I have used include those by Paul Weinberg, Ian Berry, Gideon Mendel, Dave Hartman, Guy Tillim, Joao Silva etc. I was not so much looking at photo essayists such as Lesley Lawson or Omar Badsha, as at the 'newsworthy' press / documentary image of an 'event'.

photographers' shadows was difficult. Press and documentary photographers go to great lengths to avoid capturing their shadows as they betray the presence, and thus the subjective eye / I, of the photographer. The photographer's shadow compels the viewer to consider the constructed, framed and subjective nature of the photographic image. By drawing attention to the shadows I call the 'neutral' and 'objective' frame of the documentary photographer into question. If a documentary photographer's shadow should enter the frame by mistake an attempt is usually made to crop it out or burn / dodge it out. I, on the other hand, have reversed this process and enhanced these shadows by burning them. I have also included my own photographed shadow amongst these images as 'evidence' of my own subjective agenda.

Shadow, in psychoanalytic terms, means that part of the psyche which one wishes to repudiate or deny. In documentary images, photographers efface their presence and their point of view under the guise of objectivity. Shadows are also of significance in an art historical context, for example Giorgio de Chirico (1888 – 1978) whose paintings show the poignancy and menace of presence felt, not seen. Likewise the shadows of the 'documentary' pictures have been isolated, cropped, enlarged, modified or frozen, and in some cases are literally pressing on the bodies in ways that aim to instil a vague but palpable sense of menace, which points to the predatory nature of photographing which is intent on capturing and shooting.

As a shadow, the photographer in these works is neither present nor absent. The signification is more complex. The shadows play on Derrida's notion of 'traces'. According to Derrida's theory (Derrida 1978) the trace is undecidable: no element can function without relating to another element which itself is not simply present. Each element is constituted on the basis of the trace of it in other elements of the system. Derrida's notion of the trace suggests that all language is subject to an inherent instability and is constantly deforming and reforming. Photography's vocabulary of 'truth', like the metaphysical language of 'truth', has to be recognised as simply a vocabulary and therefore cannot escape the play of the trace: like the photographer's shadow which slides between presence and absence, the notion of truth in photography behaves similarly.

Other ways photographers reveal their presence is through each other in the frame[4]. This is the imagery I reveal in *Watching the Watcher* (catalogue figure 6), which is a composite work consisting of a grid of photographs, the subject of which is photographers taking photos of other photographers. My images have been rephotographed from publications documenting the apartheid era. The photographers have been emphasised by a thin circle, so as to make their presence more visible in what are often busy and chaotic scenes of crowds at gatherings, demonstrations, and violent events. In situations of fairly random violence, press and documentary photographers often operate in packs in order to gain the protection afforded by numbers. It happens that they inadvertently land up in each other's frames. The photographs I selected draw attention to the presence of the media at these political events and engender a sense of scepticism about the notion of a 'window on the world' in which the viewer is a privileged spectator. Instead, the presence of the many photographers draws attention to the active presence of photographers at these events. Once the viewer's attention is drawn to the fact that a photographer consciously frames events, one can begin to question the 'neutrality' of documentary photography.

In a group of my own 'original' images, I have also reframed the image of the male press photographer to illustrate the phallic intrusiveness of their long lenses. I thus comment on the contemporary mythology of the male photographer as hero. *Press Stud* (catalogue figure 7) mocks the machismo of the pressmen and also highlights the infringement of privacy implied by their long lenses. Thus documentary photography is exposed as an act of appropriation or possession of the unwitting subject. As discussed in Chapter One, long lenses are used by press photographers who are often further away from the 'action' than they seem. Functional though this was, it is also related to a macho image, almost part of the clothing of the professional male photographer. *Bang-Bang Shots* (catalogue figure 8) also makes reference

[4] This is particularly marked in photographs of violence or action where little time is available for taking photographs, and therefore minimal attention is paid to framing.

[5] This name comes from the title of a book by Greg Marinovich and Jaoa Silva, which describes the adventures of a group of South African press photographers including Marinovich, Silva and Ken Osterbrooek and Kevin Carter.

to the male photographer as hero, focusing specifically on the 'Bang-Bang Club'[5] and the shooting of Greg Marinovich and Ken Oosterbroek.

The frame is of much importance to all of these series, which is why so much emphasis is placed on them visually in my work. The frames are thick and black. I rephotograph the photographs, including the borders, and allow the binding of the book to show or the light to obscure part of the image. I have also chosen to leave the film sprockets visible, while the writing on the film is apparent in some pictures. This alerts the viewer to the contrivance of the photographic medium. The black borders with the information they carry (film type, number of frame, sprockets) draw attention to the self-conscious construction of my photographs and also take a tongue-in-cheek sideswipe at the Modernist obsessive emphasis on materiality and medium. The photographs are deliberately printed on resin-coated paper which is associated with throw-away prints and quick and easy press photography, rather than the Modernist 'fine art' print for gallery display.

This is also true for the *Framing Documentary* (catalogue figures 10 - 18) images. In these, some of the events photographed are 'true' but are made to look 'false', while others are 'false' but made to look 'true', for example, there are two bomb scenes represented: one 'actual' and the other one staged for a news commercial. The documentary photograph portrays a specific time frame; in my work the rephotographed image has been released from the constraints of a time and the specificity of history. In documentary photography, the frame pretends to contain the story or history; my photographs affirm that it shows only a small part of a history. In the composite works such as *Framing Documentary* and *Arrested Moments* (catalogue figure 9) there are pictures which make up the history (in the same work) and other photographs surrounding this. The 'original' images were culled from different photographs in a wide range of different time frames. In these composite pictures there is a collapse of history because many 'struggle' images have been forced together, with dates ranging from the late 50s to the early 90s. It therefore becomes apparent that a frame cannot contain the whole history or story.

While documentary photography freezes an event or captures action, I freeze (or refreeze) a moment that is already captured. This questions the 'frozen moment' ethos of photography. The shadow images are mostly very static; the action seems doubly stilled. The 'action' in the 'event' has been removed and a small piece of the photograph which is incidental to the subject of the original photograph has been focused upon. In *Arrested Moments* I have rephotographed images of press / documentary photographers being shot at or arrested. These are presented as a composite image of eight 8x10 photographs in a grid formation. Although the images in *Arrested Moments* are rephotographed and therefore are doubly frozen, the groupings of the photographs are massed. This creates a visually chaotic effect, and the busy subjects enforce the chaos of the situations or event.

Where documentary photography was focused on a specific event and was didactic in its purpose, my images can be approached in what Barthes calls an 'open' way. The meaning of the text remains radically 'open' to multiple and contradictory readings. Roland Barthes (1970) proposed a distinction between a text which is 'lisable' (readable) and one which is 'scriptible' (writable). A readable text is a traditional one that conforms to the prevailing codes and conventions, both social and formal, for example, documentary photography. It is therefore readily interpreted and naturalistic and can be easily read. An 'unreadable' text is one which largely evades, parodies, or innovates with regard to prevailing conventions, and thus it persistently shocks, baffles, and frustrates the standard process of reading. By drawing attention to the conventionality and artifice of art or literature, an unreadable text destroys the illusion that a literary or visual text represents social reality. In *Framing Documentary*, for example, the photographs do not readily give up their meaning. There is a blandness about the work, which is intentional and plays on the viewer's expectations of the documentary 'event' as being something exciting and newsworthy. In *Framing Documentary* I have rephotographed 'struggle' frames and pointed to the 'extraneous' and 'uncrucial' detail or material (focus, reflections etc). I select a traditional description or event, and reframe or expose elements in it by introducing unexpected authorial interruptions. I set up the frames or genres of traditional documentary and then establish 'framebreaks'[6] in order to draw

[6] 'Framebreaks', in literary theory, involve the setting up of a traditional description, character, event or narrational voice, and then foregrounding or exposing it through unexpected authorial interruptions, unusual material, exaggeration or parody.

attention to the act of photographing and the ways in which meaning is constructed in photography.

The series, *Framing Documentary*, consists of my original photographs converted into large digital prints that absorb the spectator through scale. They extend the concerns of the above-mentioned images (such as *Framing the Shadow* and *Watching the Watcher*), with particular emphasis on the predatory nature of photography and the gaps between reality and contrivance. These images focus on news events: bombs, funerals, political gatherings and accidents, and the relationship between these events and the documentary and press photographers who photographed them. They are 'newsworthy' images which attempt to be artless but are in fact very intentionally framed, and they aim to challenge both documentary and fine art conventions. They subvert documentary through their seeming blandness and their questioning of the usual scale of press or documentary photography in papers and journals. They also question documentary's hold on 'truth' through the introduction of the digital medium, which introduces doubt because of the easily manipulated quality of digital imagery.

Magubane (1978: 5) tells of his experiences at Sharpeville[7]. As a young and inexperienced photojournalist he made the mistake of being revolted and shocked by what he saw. Instead of taking close-ups that would have revealed the horror of that day, he took long shots and angered his editor. For me this incident is significant: in *Framing Documentary* I have specifically not entered the area of 'action'. There is, therefore, a deliberate distance between myself and the events photographed, which differs essentially from documentary or press photography. I am not attempting to capture the 'event' but rather the environment around the event.[8] The distance between the 'events' and myself, the photographer, or the photographing

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[7] The Sharpville massacre took place on 21 March 1961 when police opened fire on an unarmed group of anti-passbook demonstrators: 69 people were killed and 180 were injured.

[8] This method has art historical forerunners, such as Breugel's *The Procession to Calvary* (1564), (in which one struggles to locate the hill with the crosses and the Christ figure carrying his cross), or his *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* (1555), (in which only the legs of Icarus in the far right of the painting can be seen). In both of these works the 'event' is insignificant in the scene.

of non-events, reduces the emotional reaction that the documentary exposé usually expects from the viewer. The physical distance echoes the emotional distance.

Several of my series take the form of large composite photographs in which I make use of the grid. Grids often seem self-contained and are in a sense like 19th-century / Modernist biological classification displays. They appear as scientifically regimented, organised collections of specimens. Rosalind Krauss (1984: 24) has noted:

> Structurally, logically, axiomatically, the grid can only be repeated. And with an act of repetition or replication as the 'original' occasion of its usage within the experience of a given artist, the extended life of the grid in the unfolding progression of his work will be one of still more repetition as the artist engages in repeated acts of self imitation.

The grid proclaims equality and consistency. It is symmetrical and modular and it allows for orderly repetition. Krauss believes that the grid promotes silence.

> The absolute stasis of the grid, its lack of hierarchy, of centre, of inflection, emphasises not only its antireferential character but – more importantly – its hostility to narrative. This structure, impervious to time and to incident, will not permit the projection of language into the domain of the visual, and the result is silence (Krauss 1988: 21).

Krauss associates the grid with Modernism. She argues that the grid was enlisted by Modernism as 'a barricade against free speech' and 'a protective mesh against all intrusions from the outside' (Krauss 1988: 21). She accuses this formulation of restrictiveness and inflexibility, and suggests that the work of artists who submit to this structure fails to develop, but becomes, instead, involved in repetition.

My understanding of the possibilities of narrative within the grid structure differs somewhat from Krauss' argument. For me, in spite of the structured regularity of the grid, its structure

allows the artist to combine often separate or unrelated material into a whole, which generates contemplation of those images as one. In the grid, photographs are not interpreted in a vertical or horizontal context alone, but also function diagonally. This holds potential for the Postmodern telling of stories as narratives which begin to develop forwards, backwards and sideways within the delineated picture space. This creates a cumulative and repetitive narrative, which can be read by referring back to our own experiences. In my view, the horizontal, vertical and diagonal orders work contrary to a sequential temporality, because the grid's diagonal features force a more varied and dynamic reading. Photographic time and space that are slotted into such emphatic orderings assume the quality of temporal and spatial intersections. Meaning can visually criss-cross from frame to frame, which suggests a complexity of other potential attachments, detachments and reconfigurations.

Calvino (1973: 41) articulates this idea eloquently:

> The square is now entirely covered with cards and with stories. My story is also contained within it, though I can no longer say which one it is since their simultaneous interweaving has been so close. In fact the task of deciphering the stories one by one has made me neglect until now the most salient peculiarity of our way of narrating, which is how each story runs into another story, as one guest advances his strip, another from the other end advances in the opposite direction, because the stories are told from left to right or from the bottom to top they can also be read from right to left and from top to bottom and visa versa, bearing in mind that the same cards presented in a different order can change their meaning, and the same tarot is used at the same time by narrators who set forth from the four cardinal points.

Calvino offers a concept of narrative with which I feel a great affinity, since he suggests a mode of narrating which is held in a liquid and flowing form rather than the solid inflexible form of narrative or photographic realism. In making photographs I have been conscious not only of photographic traditions, but also of the ways in which literary story telling has reinvented itself in a Postmodern context. The Postmodern novel, like the Postmodern

photograph, has a way of telling which is more fluid[9] and flexible, and points to an infinite number of combinations and recombinations.

DISPLACING DISABILITY

Theorising one's own work is not easy. Much of what happens is organic and difficult to write up in an academic context, particularly work which has personal significance. *Deconstructed Documents* relies on the viewer being familiar with the conventions of documentary practice. In *Deconstructed Documents* I am interrogating documentary which in some way presents itself as transparent. I use the language of fragment and detail to evoke different ways of looking with regards to documentary. In *Displacing Disability* the codes of documentary are put to a different use and there is an application of the lessons learnt from the deconstruction of the documentary image. Here I argue for a different kind of document. While the 'documentary' photographs take place in the public sphere, the 'disability' photographs are intimate and private. Here I worked within an institution which is largely separate or hidden from the public domain. Whereas in *Framing Documentary* the series is comprised of mainly long shots, *Displacing Disability* are largely close-ups, which reveal my emotive investment in this subject. The *Displacing Disability* series also works as a foil to the frenetic action of the 'documentary' photographs and introduces a sense of quietness and poetry.[10]

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[9] Salman Rushdie (1990: 71-72) in his children's story *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* demonstrates this point about the Postmodern novel very beautifully:

> So Iff the Water Genie told Haroun about the Ocean of the Streams of the Story, and even though he was full of a sense of hopelessness and failure the magic of the Ocean began to have an effect on Haroun. He looked into the water and saw that it was made up of a thousand thousand thousand and one different currents, each one a different colour, weaving in and out of one another like a liquid tapestry of breathtaking complexity; and Iff explained that these were the Streams of the Story, that each coloured strand represented a single tale. Different parts of the Ocean contained different sorts of stories, and all the stories that had ever been told and many that were still in the process of being invented could be found here, the Ocean of the Streams of the story was in fact the biggest library in the universe. And because the stories were held in fluid form, they retained the ability to change, to become new versions of themselves, to join up with other stories and so to become yet other stories; so that unlike a library of books, the Ocean of the Streams of the Story was much more like a storeroom of yarns. It was not dead but alive.

[10] By poetry I mean a quality in which elements form a unit by syntagmatic rather than paradigmatic connections. Poetry, as opposed to other written forms does not rely on a linear chronology but on a more mysterious and illogical dynamic.

These pictures are concerned with physical and mental disability. They were taken in an institution and are intentionally bleak, static, dark and contained. They are informed by my relationship with my brother, Dean, who is autistic. Autism is often associated with the non-verbal and the unseeing, as autistic people have a limited capacity for interaction or ability to communicate. Where traditional documentary's focus is on people and, as such, it has a generic desire to communicate, my photographs don't try to reveal and expose in the traditional way. Instead of imaging people I have used a metonymic approach where a part of something stands in for the whole. As I am not dealing with exposé I have focused intensely on the fragment, to suggest rather than to explicate. I am interested in presenting the traces of people without showing them. The trace stands in for the subject and allows the subject to maintain dignity in the photographic encounter.

My brother has lived in this care facility for the past ten years. Recently he was moved to another institution, as the one I have photographed was closed down because it is going to be demolished and the land will be developed. This move was traumatic and difficult for many of the people who had lived there for many years. Some of the photographs have been taken subsequent to this move (catalogue figure 20). Generally the pictures of the deserted building are slightly wider shots than the extreme close-ups of *Displacing Disability 1* and *2* (catalogue figure 19). The silent deserted building seemed to hold a brooding quality and echoed sadly with the presences of people, now gone. The photographs show the emptiness of the building through the abandoned look of the spaces and the damage which has been inflicted on the building (for example, shattered glass, a staircase boarded up with corrugated iron, signs which have been taken down and an abandoned suitcase). The damage to the building suggests the emotional violence that this move engendered.

I have taken as a starting point the work of Martha Rosler, who dismantles the pieties of photographic concern through the conspicuous absence of the subjects (the victims) in her work. In her photographs (the Bowery studies for instance) their presence is conjured up in the representational sites or spaces where we expect to find them, but we are not shown the

actual subject. She shows the spaces in which her subjects exist rather than the subjects. As in Rosler's work, I refuse to image disabled people as victims or spectacle.

In social documentary there is a long history of representing the subject as 'victim'. Physical and mental disability are often presented in a way which aims to expose an element of the disabled person's life, and therefore seeks to elicit sympathy with the 'victims' status. There is also an area of photography which aims to position disability or difference as a form of display or exhibition, for example, the works of Joel Peter-Witkin who uses amputees, dwarves, Siamese twins and hemaphrodites (alongside corpses and other bizarre elements). These people are usually presented on some sort of stage set and are arranged for display, as in a 19th-century 'freak show'. If one looks at the documentary photographs that Diane Arbus took in institutions which housed people with mental disabilities, one notices that she positions her subjects as 'freaks' and she dresses them up in masks and costumes (and divorces them from the context in which they live). This reinforces this notion of difference as 'freak'. My work, in contrast to Arbus' rendering of a similar subject, challenges some strident patterns of investigative, intrusive and expositional documentary imagery. Using a metonymic approach enables me to show a subjective documentary in which I reveal that I cannot truly 'know' my subject, and can only ever really have access to fragmented glimpses. I do not aim to expose or reveal my subjects.

My reluctance to 'reveal' has a lot to do with my personal investment in the subject. It is possible that I would have been less sensitive to photographing this environment had it not been for my involvement, and the autobiographical element has resulted in more personal, poetic, evocative and non-intrusive imagery.

I have used the wheelchair as a metaphor for disability. The photographs are taken, therefore, from a wheelchair height (or lower) and thus focus on things that are more obvious from that lower viewpoint (for example, a handrail). These photographs are very static, in a way that refers to the frozen moment in photography. Here there is a sense of the idea that the moment stretches backwards and forwards in time. The residents of this institution have very static and regulated lives: they keep to the same routines. They are constrained and restricted within

this space – restricted in terms of movement, time and personal freedom. This sense of confinement and stasis is evident in the photographs. In *Displacing Disability 1* and *2* the extreme close-ups and tight framing of the photographs do not allow for an extended sense of movement: the square format of the images is somehow more confined and box-like than a rectangular format, for example. The images are dominated by horizontals and verticals (rather than more dynamic diagonals). This sense of confinement is echoed in the subjects of some of the photographs, for instance a lock on a locker, and sunlight filtered through bars and reflected onto a wall.

Both *Deconstructed Documents* and *Displacing Disability* are series which have been born as a result of my research for this thesis. My research into documentary and my investigation of its alternatives impacted directly on my work, visually and conceptually. This is evident in my pursuit of alternative photographic languages, other than traditional documentary as a method of social or political photographic inquiry, and my investigation of alternative modes of presentation.

CONCLUSION:

Apartheid era photography was characterised by a social documentary photographic tradition which had an imperative to document and record the ills of apartheid. This practice, based on a certainty in an undisputed truth, was also derived from a colonialist-Modernist faith in the ability of the camera to reveal the 'truth'. Apartheid-era documentary photography was critical of a socio-political situation caused by apartheid, but was not particularly self-critical or critical of social issues (such as gender) other than those connected to apartheid.

Over the last decade, however, there has been a questioning of identity, history and modes of representation. A new criticality has emerged from an awareness of how concepts of identity, history and representation are constructed. On a macro scale South Africans are in a process of rewriting histories and re-examining themselves. As a nation we are questioning our past and present, and the critical photographic practice which has emerged after 1990, is part of this larger process.

The radical changes which have occurred in South African photography are, in some part, due to the changing socio-political situation. Other changes are connected to the shift away from Modernism towards a critical Postmodernism. Whereas, during the apartheid era, documentary photography was critical of government policies, post-apartheid photography questions *all* perception, *all* constructs, *all* identities. Everything is regarded as fragmentary, chimerical, illusory, temporary, in the process of invention, reinvention and change. As I have demonstrated, Post-apartheid photography is intensely critical of society and cultural activity and challenges the assumptions and premises of documentary photography.

However, this is not to say that it offers 'better' or a more significant body of work than that which preceded it. It merely constitutes a *different* practice, with different guiding theories, and different practitioners.

While contemporary post-apartheid photography is still in the process of reacting against the dominant and monolithic tradition of documentary photography, one can speculate about a future photographic practice in South Africa in which a true marriage between documentary and art photography might take place. A transformed and responsible documentary practice might occur in which the old social functions of this medium are not rejected but rather reinvented, to allow for a sensitive and creative acknowledgement of the subjective and personal in the investigation of social issues.

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Fig 53. David Goldblatt, *New Year's Day Picnic, Hartbeespoort* (ca 1955 / 60). Black and white photograph. © Goldblatt, South African National gallery.
(Source: illustration, Sanner, 1999: 259).

Fig 54. David Goldblatt, *Farmers son with his nursemaid, Marico Bushveld, 1964* (1964). Black and white photograph.
(Source: illustration, Goldblatt and Gordimer 1986: 91).

Fig 55. David Goldblatt, *Girl in her new tutu on the stoep of her parents' house, Boksburg, 1980* (1980). Black and white photograph.
(Source: illustration, Goldblatt and Gordimer 1986: 53).

Fig 56. David Goldblatt, *African mineworker's bunk with pin-ups. Demolished compound near Springs, July 1965*, (1965). Black and white photograph. © David Goldblatt 1973.
(Source: illustration, Goldblatt Fig. 14 1973).

Fig 57. David Goldblatt, *While the stage is being lowered to a new position, the shaftsinking team cluster below in the centre of the shaft bottom. There they should escape any rock dislodged from the side wall by the movement of the stage.* (Ca. 1969-70). Black and white photograph. © David Goldblatt 1973.
(Source: illustration, Goldblatt Fig. 29 1973).

Fig 58. David Goldblatt, *Basuto shaftsinkers seeking work. President Steyn No. 4, Welkom, 1969*, (1969). Black and white photograph. © David Goldblatt 1973.
(Source: illustration, Goldblatt Fig. 14 1973).

Fig 59. David Goldblatt, *Bunks in a compound for black miners, Simmer and Jack Gold mine, Germiston, 1965* (1965). Black and white photograph.
(Source: illustration, Goldblatt and Gordimer 1986: 11).

Fig 60. David Goldblatt, *Mr and Mrs Richard Maponya, who live in Dube, the most prestigious of the Soweto townships*, (ca 1973). Black and white photograph. © David Goldblatt 1973.
(Source: illustration, *Optima* 1973: 42).

Fig 61. Jo Ractliffe, *Vlakplaas 2 July 1999 (drive-by shooting)* (1999). Black and white photograph.
(Source: illustration: poster for *X-scape: Photography in a New South Africa*).

Fig 62. Peter Magubane, *The notorious Green Car – a pot shot from the back seat* (1976). Black and white photograph.
(Source: illustration, Magubane: 1986: unpaginated).

Fig 63. Peter Magubane, *Young women from the Nongoma area at the reed Ceremony*. Colour photograph.
(Source: illustration, Magubane 1998:35)

Fig 64. Andrew Ingram, *Five-year-old Llwelleyn Erasmus was found hanging in the bushes near Kalkfontein* (1997). Colour photograph.
(Source: illustration, *Mail and Guardian 13* (32). August 15 – 21 1997. 15.

Fig 65. Roger Meintjies, *Van Riebeecks Hedge*. Black and white photograph.
(Source: illustration, Godby, Michael. 1983. Through a Lens Darkly. Reflections on truth and meaning in the work of six photographers. *Through a Lens Darkly*. Cape Town: South African National Gallery. Catalogue for an exhibition held at the South African National Gallery 1993).

Fig 66. Roger Meintjies, *Van Riebeecks Hedge*. Black and white photograph.
(Source: illustration, Godby, Michael. 1983. Through a Lens Darkly. Reflections on truth and meaning in the work of six photographers. *Through a Lens Darkly*. Cape Town: South African National Gallery. Catalogue for an exhibition held at the South African National Gallery 1993).

Fig 67. Roger Meintjies, *Van Riebeecks Hedge*. Black and white photograph.
(Source: illustration, Godby, Michael. 1983. Through a Lens Darkly. Reflections on truth and meaning in the work of six photographers. *Through a Lens Darkly*. Cape Town: South African National Gallery. Catalogue for an exhibition held at the South African National Gallery 1993).

Fig 68. David Goldblatt, *Remnant of a hedge planted in 1660 to keep the indigenous Khoikhoi out of the first European settlement in South Africa. 16 May 1993* (1993). Black and white photograph.
(Source illustration: Goldblatt: 1998: 46).

Fig 69. David Goldblatt, *Remnant of a hedge planted in 1660 to keep the indigenous Khoikhoi out of the first European settlement in South Africa. 16 May 1993* (1993). Black and white photograph.
(Source illustration: Goldblatt: 1998: 47).

Fig 70. Jean Brundrit, *Does your lifestyle depress your mother?*, (1998). Black and White photograph.
(Source: Illustration: Lundström and Pierre 1998:102).

Fig 71. Terry Kurgan, *Maternal Exposures* (1997). Installation of black and white photographs with sound.
(Source: illustration, Kurgan, Terry: 1997: 23).

Fig 72. Geoff Grundlingh, *Portraits: the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Worcester*, (1999). Black and white photograph.
(Source: illustration: Kaplan 1999: 47).

Fig 73. Zwelethu Mthethwa, *Untitled* (1996). Colour photograph.
(Source: illustration Source: Lundström and Pierre 1998: 85).

Fig 74. Zwelethu Mthethwa, *Untitled* (1996). Colour photograph.
(Source: illustration Source: Lundström and Pierre 1998: 86).

Fig 75. Dave Southwood, *Case*, (1999). Colour photograph.
(Source: illustration, Kaplan 1999: 76).

Fig 76. Jo Ractliffe, *Pinhole photograph of End of Time billboard on the N9* outside Nieu Bathesda, Karoo (1999). Black and white photograph.
(Source; illustration, exhibition invitation postcard 1999).

Fig 77. Sue Williamson, *Truth Games* (1999). Mixed media installation.
(Source: illustration, exhibition poster 1999).

Fig 78. Jo Ractliffe, *Bridges for Baldessari* (1996). Digital prints, colour prints, gouache, and 102x 91 cm.
(Source: illustration, Grundlingh 1997: 18).

Fig 79. Minette Vari, *Alien* (1998). Video.
(Source: illustration, Lundström and Pierre 1998: 70).

Fig 80. Minette Vari, *Zulu*, (1995). Colour Postcard.
(Source: illustration, Atkinson and Brietz, 1999: 128).

Fig 81. Minette Vari, *Self Portrait 2* (1995). Photographic print 75x 102cm.
(Source: illustration, Jamal and Williamson 1996: 101).

Fig 82. Jean Brundrit, *Dyke Career Calendar* (2000). Black and white photograph, digital prints and calendar.
(Source: illustration, exhibition invitation postcard 1999).

Fig 83. Bridget Baker, *So it Goes* (1996). Tins, photograph, Vicks Vaporub, 3.5cm diameter. X 2cm each.
(Source: illustration Jamal and Williamson: 125).

Fig 84. Mustafa Maluka, *Malawi Squatter Camp, Bishop Lavis playground, Central Cape Town Apartment, Boeta Babes Spaza Shop, Bishop Lavis, Pro Gun March, Central Cape Town, Gardens, Cape Town* (1999). Digital prints on photographic matt paper.

Fig 85. Minette Vari, *Alien* (1998). Video.
(Source: illustration, Lundström and Pierre 1998: 71).

Fig 86. Sue Williamson, *A Tale of Two Cradocks* (1994). Laser prints, wood, perspex, and 42x330x20cm.
(Source: illustration, Jamal and Williamson, 1996: 155).

Fig 87. Doris and Mfeli Nkosi and Msizi Kuhlane, *Ghetto Diaries: Across the Divide* (1997) Video produced by *Mail and Guardian* for SABC 1.
(Source: illustration, Kurgan, Terry: 1997: 21).

Fig 88. Jean Brundrit, *Valued Families* (1995). Silver print on fibre paper, 50x50 cm, Edition of 3, Collection: Gertrude Posel Gallery, University of the Witwatersrand.
(Source: illustration, Jamal and Williamson, 1996: 97).

Fig 89. Jane Alexander, *Triumph over Capitalism* (1995). Photomontage, 17,8x22, 5cm.
(Source: illustration: Alexander 1995: 32).

Fig 90. Jane Alexander, *Portrait of a Man with Landscape and Procession (Bantu Stephen Biko 1946-1977)* (1995). Photomontage, 17,8x22, 5cm, collection: South African National Gallery.
(Source: illustration: Grundlingh 1997: 25).

Fig 91. Jo Ractliffe, *Nadir* (1986-88). Photolithographs with silkscreen.
(Source: illustration, reproduced by kind permission of the artist).

Fig 92. Jo Ractliffe, *reShooting Diana* (1995). Silver prints on fibre paper, glass, and steel.
(Source: illustration, Jamal and Williamson: 1996: 77).

Fig 93. Jo Ractliffe, *reShooting Diana* (1995). Silver prints on fibre paper, glass, steel.
(Source: illustration, Jamal and Williamson: 1996: 77).

Fig 94. Jo Ractliffe, *N1 (Every Hundred Kilometres)* (1999). Black and white photographs.
(Source: illustration, reproduced by kind permission of the artist).

Fig 1. A.V.R van Oudtshoorn, *Thundering Through* (undated). Black and white photograph.

Fig 2. A.V.R van Oudtshoorn, *Thro' Sands and Shallows* (undated). Black and white photograph.

Fig 3 Will Till, *Veld Fantasy* (undated) Black and white photograph.

Fig. 4. A.D. Bensusan, *Early Cast* (undated). Black and white photograph.

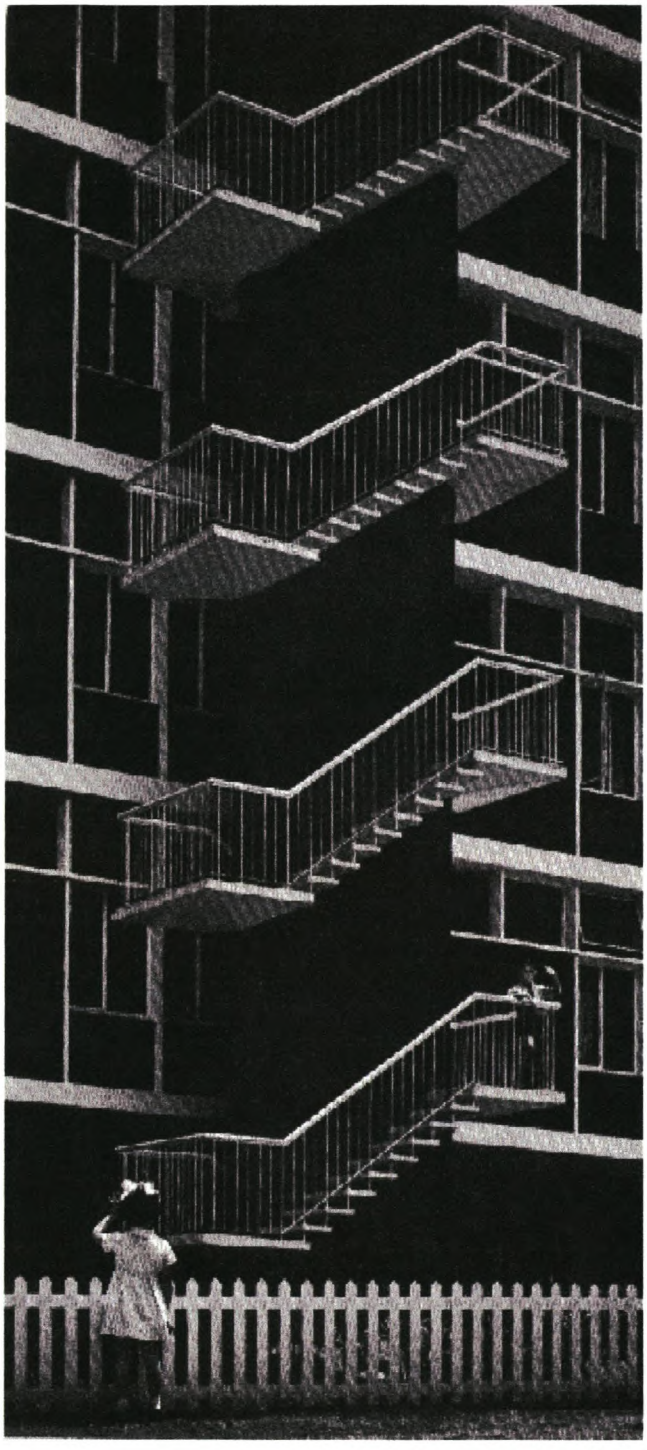

Fig.5. Ho Koo, *Farewell* (undated). Black and white photograph.

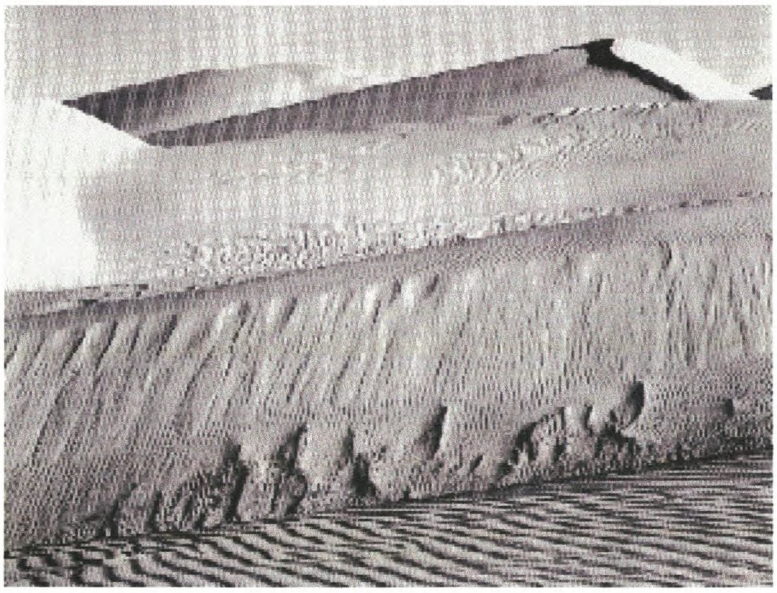

Fig 6. Edward Weston, *Dunes, Oceano* (1936). Gelatin-silver print

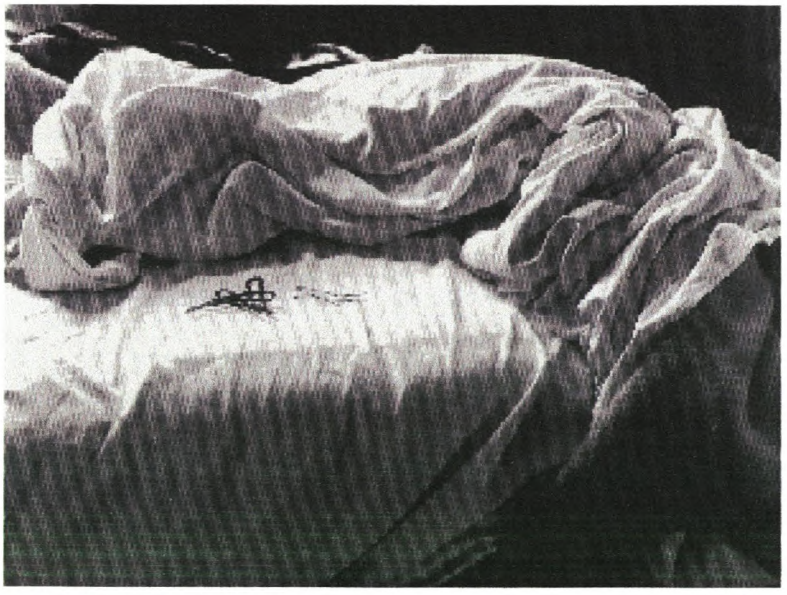

Fig 7. Imogen Cunningham, *The Unmade Bed* (1957).
Black and white photograph.

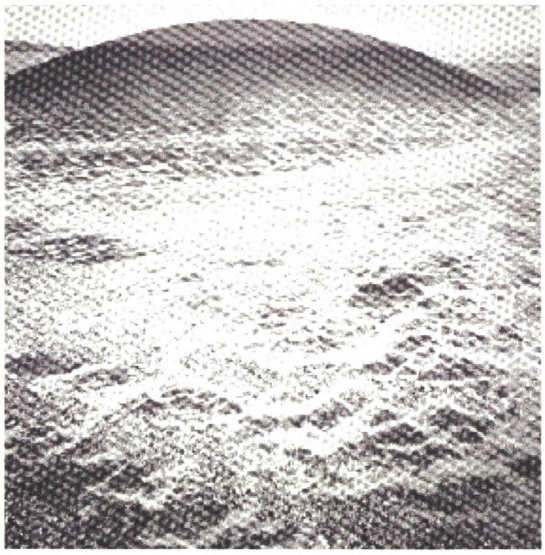

Fig 8. Amy Schoeman, *Dune* (ca 1988) photograph, 49,5x49,5 cm.

Fig 9. Gordon Bleach, *Floodlit Beach, Muizenberg* (ca. 1985).
Cibachrome photograph, 18,2x23, 5cm.

Fig. 10. Geoff Grundlingh, *Untitled* (ca. 1978). Black and white photograph.

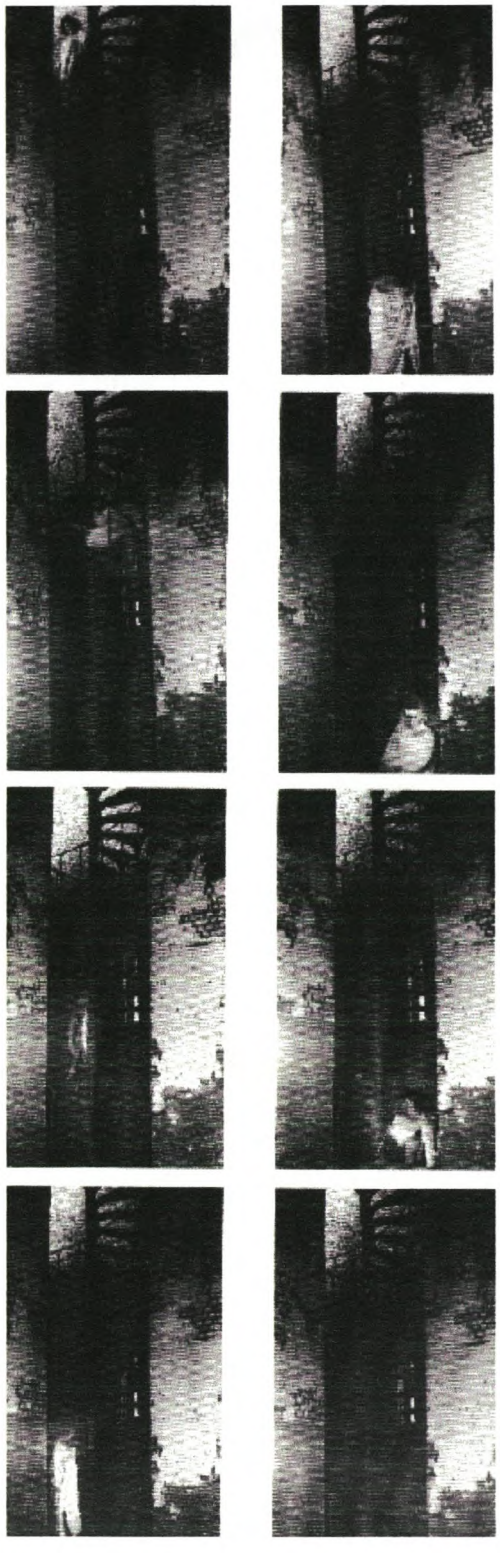

Fig 11. Neville Dubow, *Nude Descending a Spiral Staircase* (ca 1982). Silver print, composite set of eight images, each 155x100cm.

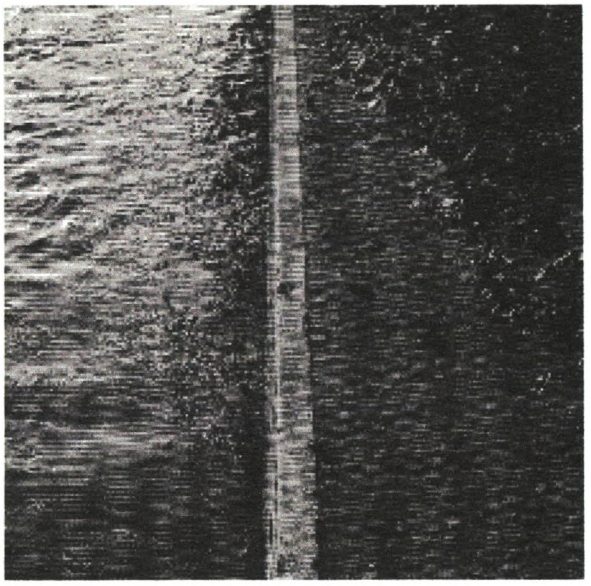

Fig 12. Neville Dubow, *Points of Connection 2* (1989).
Silver print, each 340x220cm.

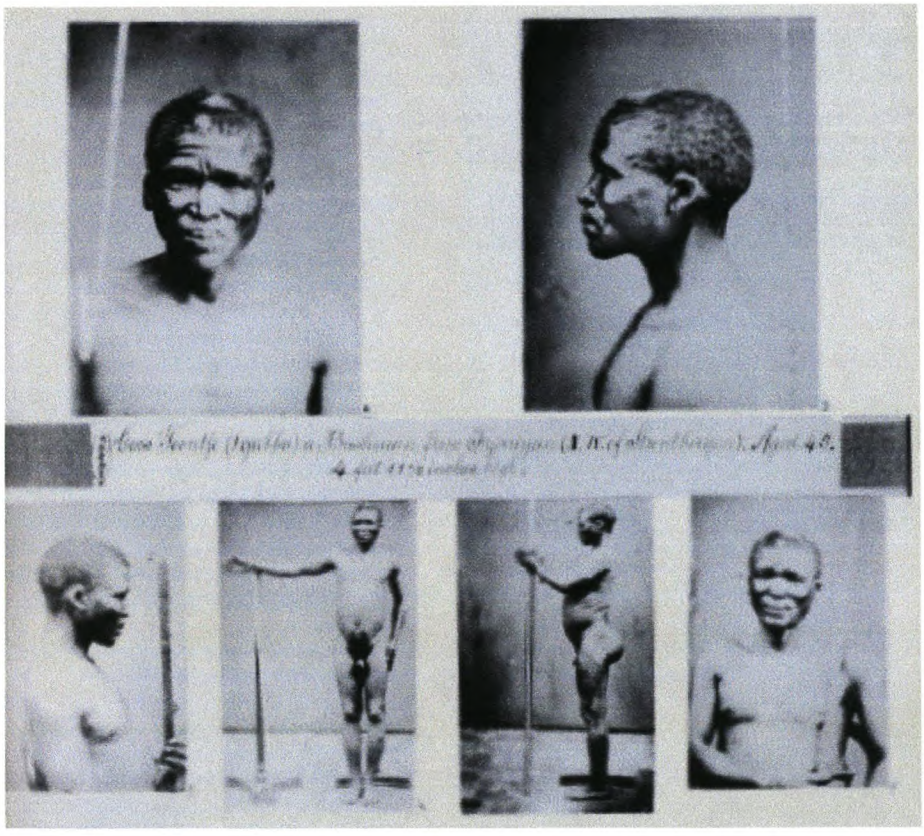

Fig 13. Lawrence and Selkirk, *Six photographs of !Gubbu* (1870-71).
Black and white photograph.

Fig 14. Anonymous, *The Cape of Good Hope Exhibition at the Paris Universal Exhibition, 1867* (1867). Black and white photograph.

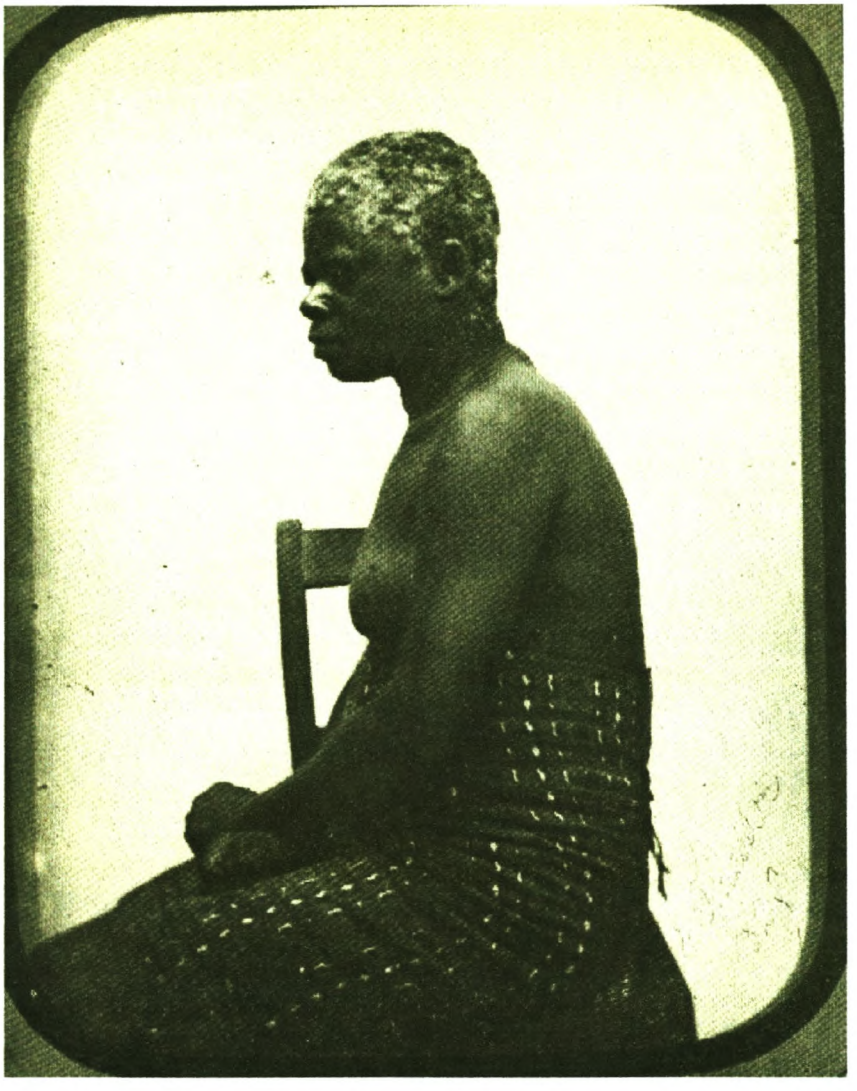

Fig 15. E Thiésson, *Native Woman of Sofala-Moçambique* (1845). Daguerreotype.

Fig 16. James Chapman, *Pictures of African travel: Bushmen at Koobie.* (1860-64). Stereographs.

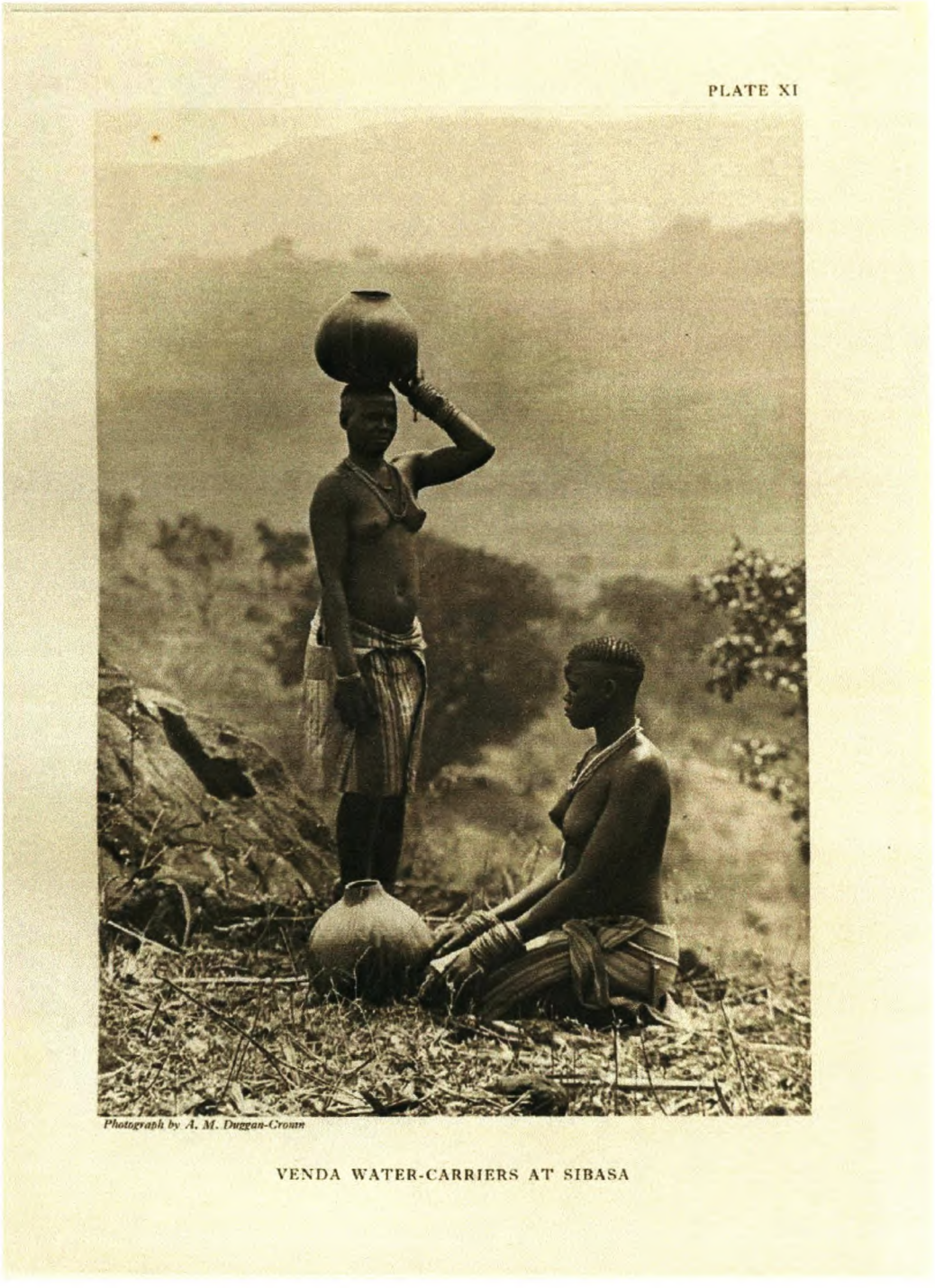

Fig 17. Alfred Duggan-Cronin, *Venda Water Carriers at Sibisa* (ca 1928) Photogravure.

Fig 18. Alfred Duggan-Cronin, *Venda Girls Filling Granaries* (ca 1928) Photogravure.

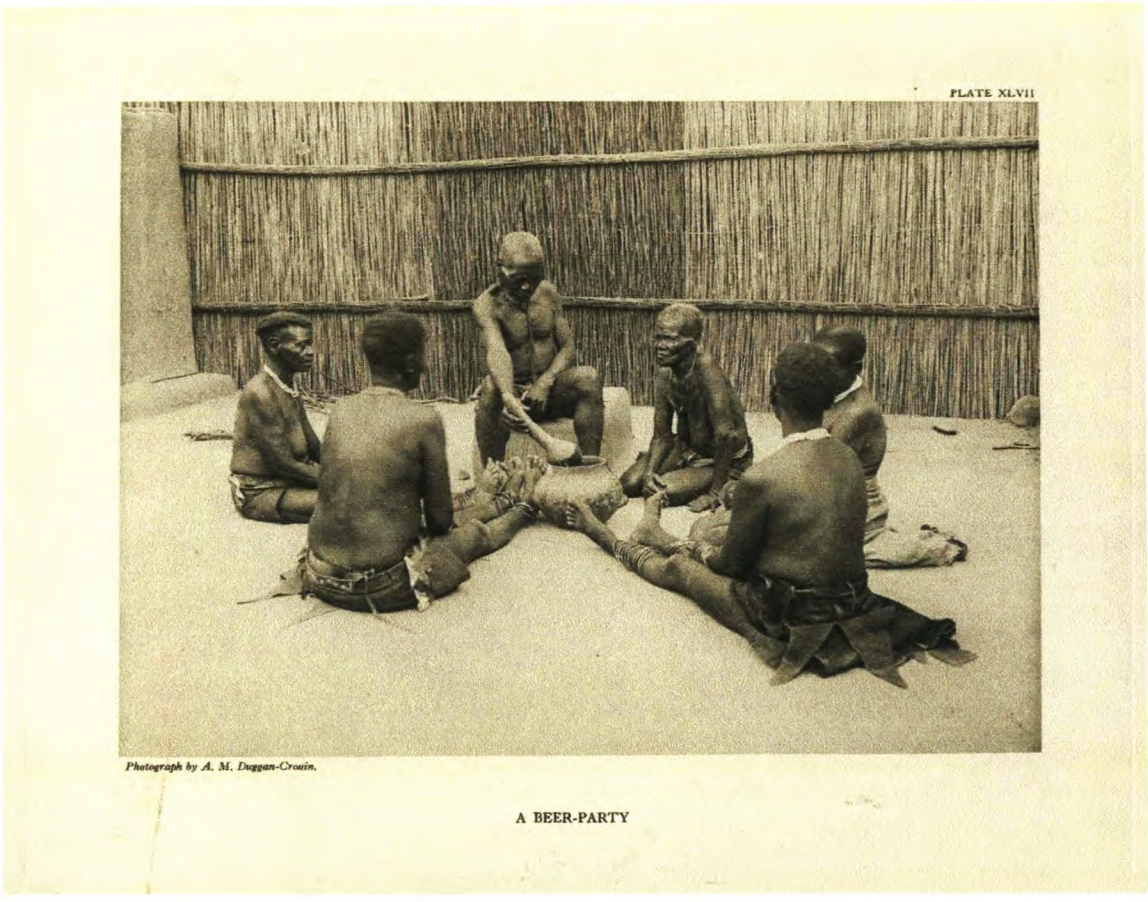

Fig 19. Alfred Duggan-Cronin, *A Beer Party* (ca 1928) Photogravure.
(Source: illustration, Duggin-Cronin, Plate XLVII, 1928).

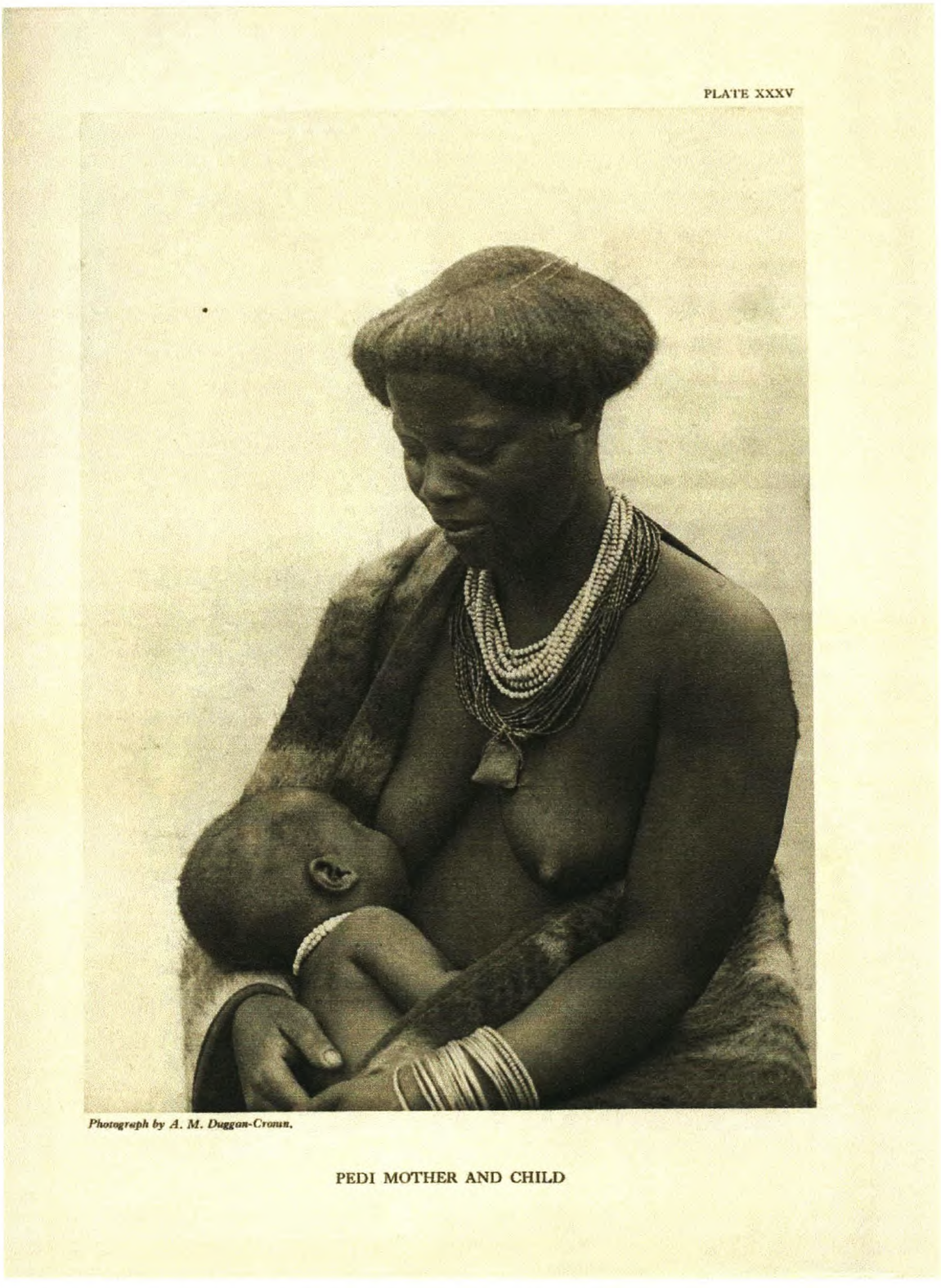

Fig 20. Alfred Duggan-Cronin, *Pedi Mother and Child* (ca 1931) Photogravure.

Fig 21. Sam Nzima, *Student carrying the fatally injured 13-year-old schoolboy named Hector Peterson* (1976). Photograph.

Fig 22. Gideon Mendel *Mourners clash with the police during a wake at the home of three-year-old Mtina Ngubeni, who was shot in the head by police, Atteridgeville township, Pretoria, September 1985.* Black and white photograph.

Fig 23. Julian Cobbing, *Eastern Cape United Democratic Front leader Mathew Goniwe salutes the crowd at the funeral of youth activist Tamasanque Steven, Joza township, Grahamstown, 1986.* (1986). Black and white photograph.

Fig 24. Bob Gosani *The Americans, Drum magazine, Sophiatown, November, 1954* (1954). Black and white photograph. *Drum* ©.

Fig 25. Lewis Hine *Bowery Mission Breadline* (1906).
Black and white photograph. Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Purchase copy print © 1997 Museum of modern Art, New York.

Fig 26. Margaret Bourke-White *Sharecropper's Home* (1937).
Black and white photograph. Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

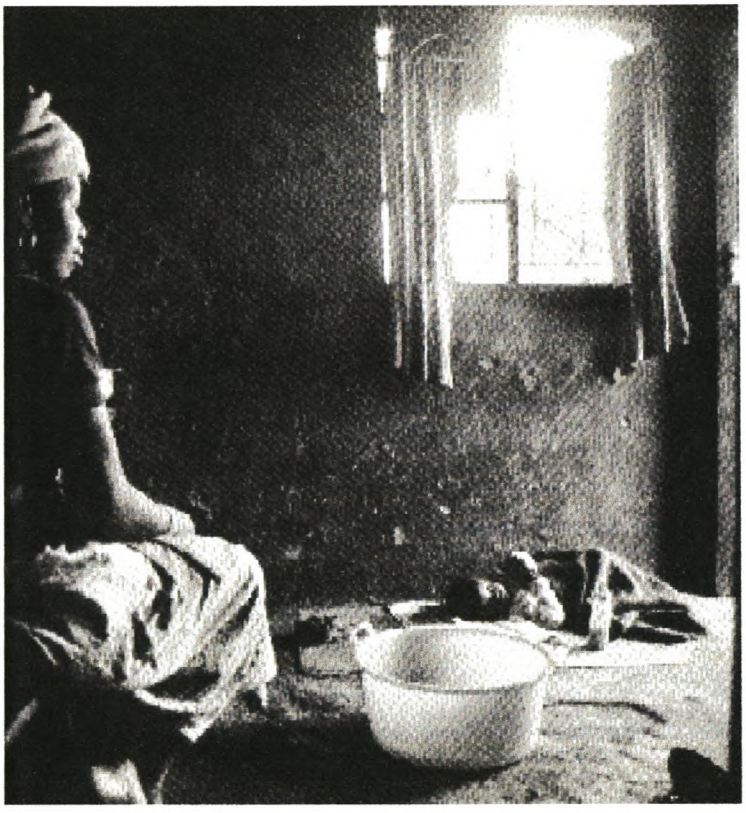

Fig 27. Peter Magubane (untitled) (undated). Black and white photograph.

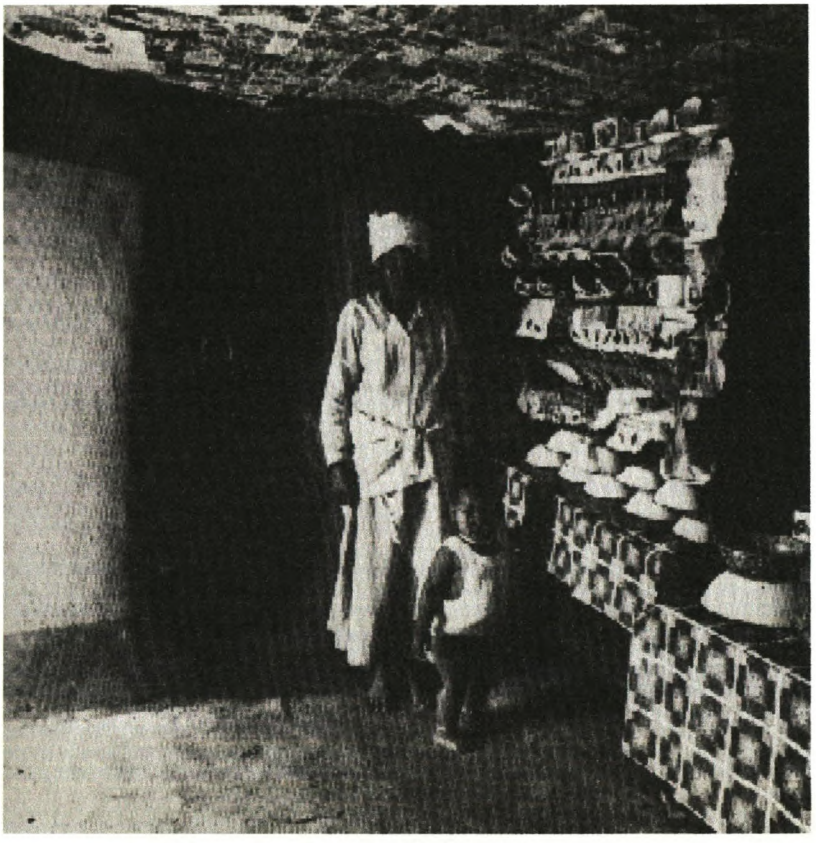

Fig 28. Paul Alberts (untitled) (undated) black and white photograph.

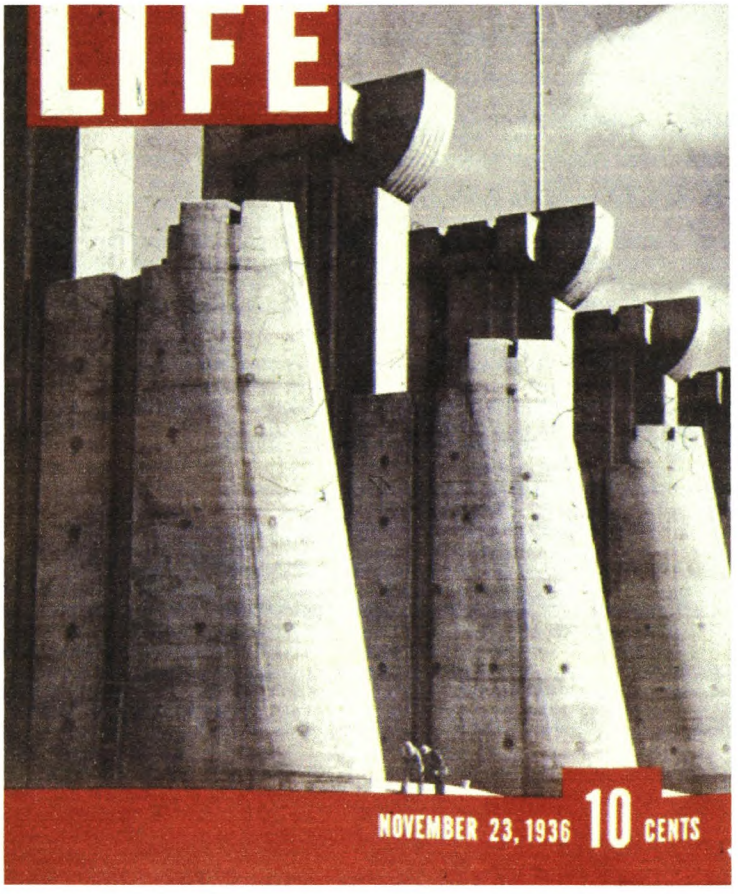

Fig. 29. Margaret Bourke-White, *Hoover Dam* (1936).
Black and white photograph.

Fig. 30. *Drum* (1952). Magazine covers.

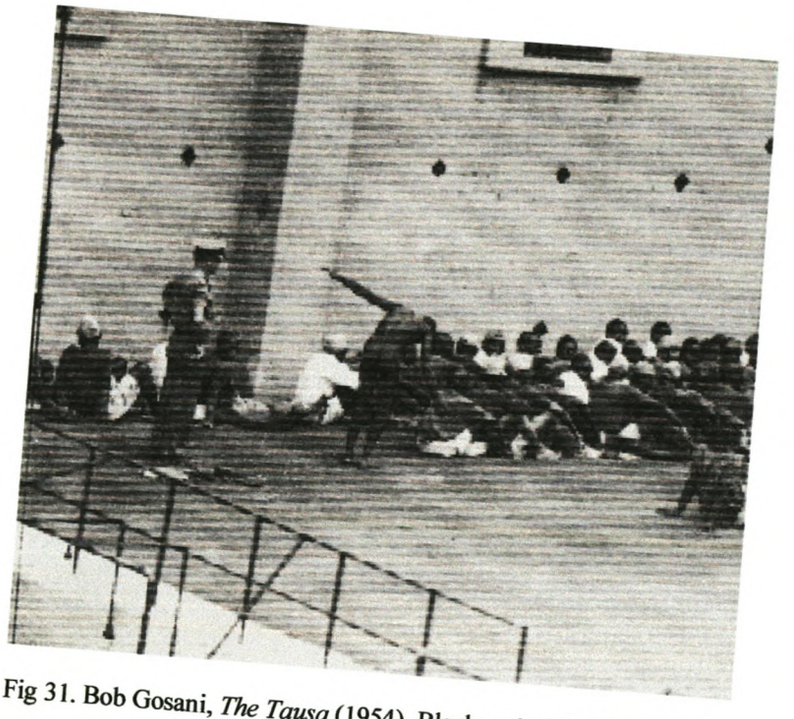

Fig 31. Bob Gosani, *The Tausa* (1954). Black and white photograph.

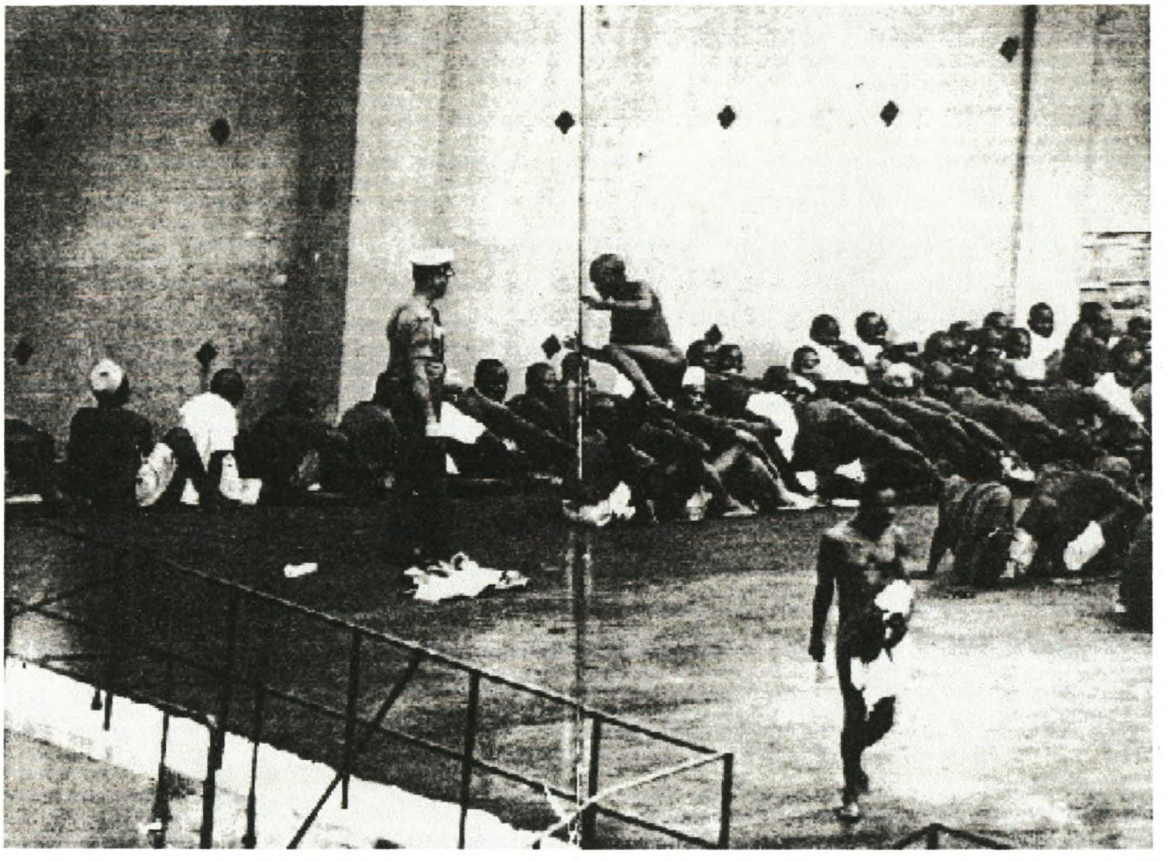

Fig 32. Bob Gosani, *The Tausa* (1954). Black and white photograph.

Fig 33. Bob Gosani, *The Tausa* (1954). Black and white photograph.

Fig 34. Eli Weinberg, *WalterSisulu reads Luthuli's speech*, (1954). Black and white photograph.

Fig 35. Eli Weinberg, *Views of a typical Compound* (ca.1955). Black and white photograph.

Fig 36. Eli Weinberg, *Views of a typical Compound*, (ca.1955). Black and white photograph.

Fig. 37 Ernest Cole *During Medical Examination the nude men are herded through a string of Doctors offices* (undated).
Black and white photograph.

Fig 38. Ernest Cole *Barracks-like buildings are divided into starkly simple rooms with bunk space for twenty men* (undated).
Black and white photograph.

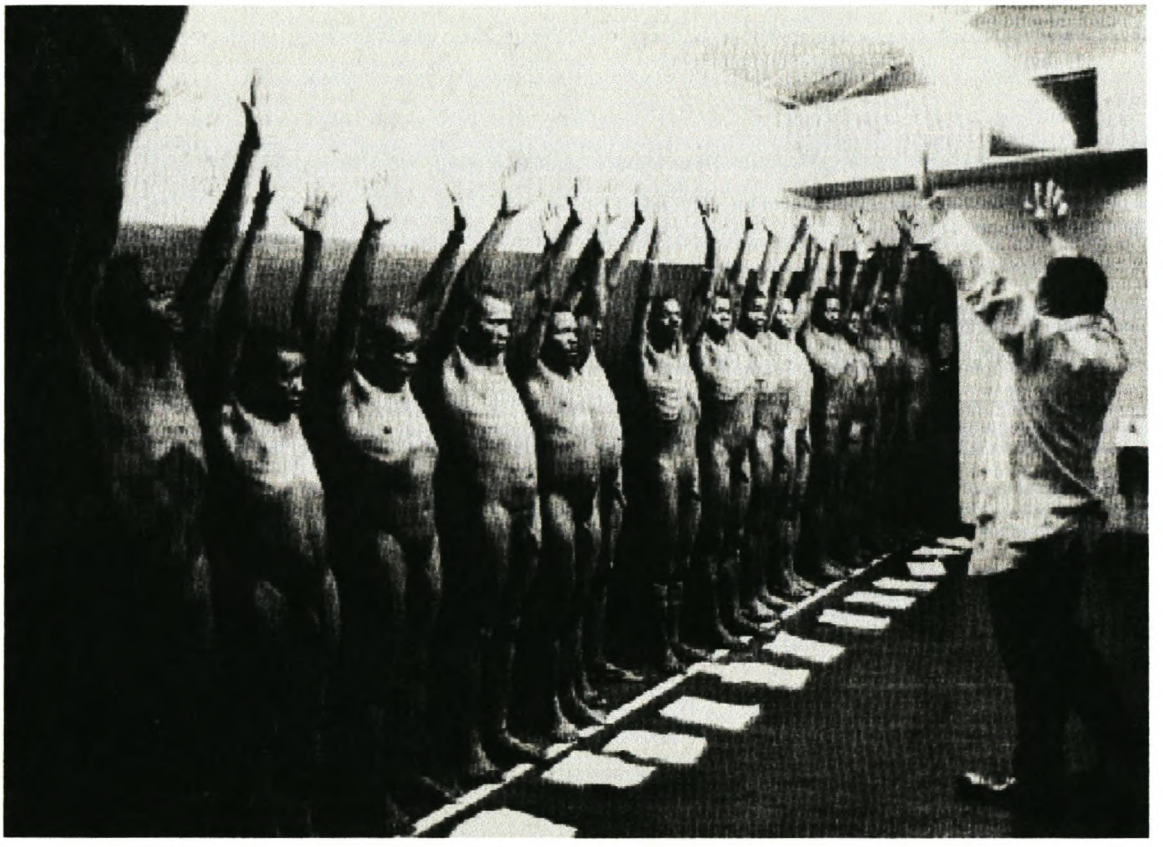

Fig 39. Peter Magubane, *Wenela Mine Recruiting Corporation medical checkup* (ca.1968). Black and white photograph.

Fig 40. Peter Magubane, *Living Conditions for black workers at a gold mine in Johannesburg* (ca 1968). Black and white photograph.

Fig 41. Peter Magubane, *This was the fate of several men who drove into the midst of a battle between the police and a mob in Alexandria township.* (1976). Black and white photograph.

Fig 42. Peter Magubane, *A passing car ends up bottoms up across a busy street with its occupants fatally wounded.* (1976). Black and white photograph.

Fig 43. Gideon Mendel, *Police attack youths early in the morning on the day of the Pollsmoor prison March.* (1985). Black and white photograph.

Fig 44. Guy Tillim, *Vigilantes, unopposed by the police, set fire to homes in Crossroads, a squatter camp near Cape Town, May 1986* (1986). Black and white photograph.

Fig 45. Themba Nkosi, *a Duduza township resident lies dead while members of a special police squad take a smoke break after an all night 'cleanup', Transvaal, July, 1985* (1985). Black and white photograph.

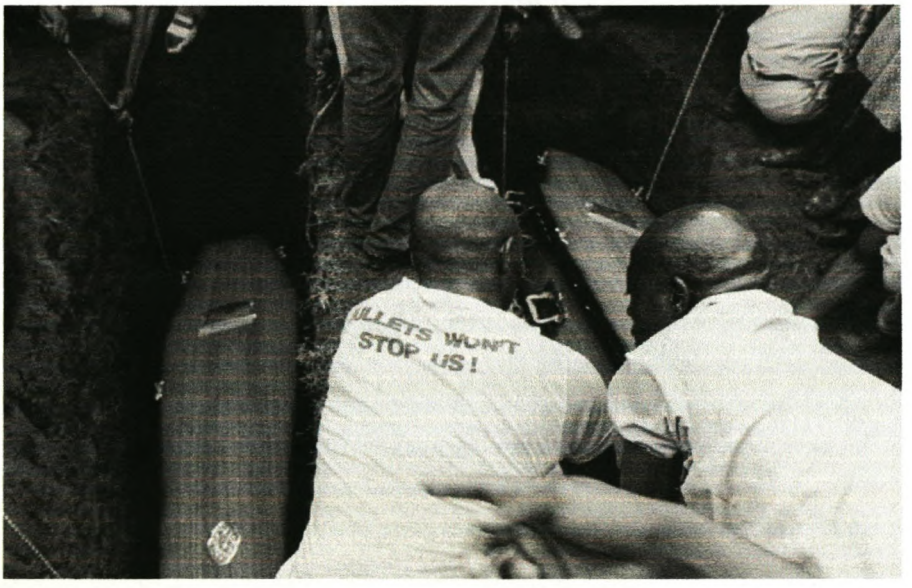

Fig 46. Gideon Mendel, *Coffins are lowered at the funeral of people killed in the 'Queenstown massacre' when police opened fire after a meeting called to plan a consumer boycott, December 1985* (1985). Black and white photograph.

Fig. 47. Dave Hartman, *People build a burning barricade, Belgravia Road, Athlone, Cape Town, November, 1986* (1986). Black and white photograph.

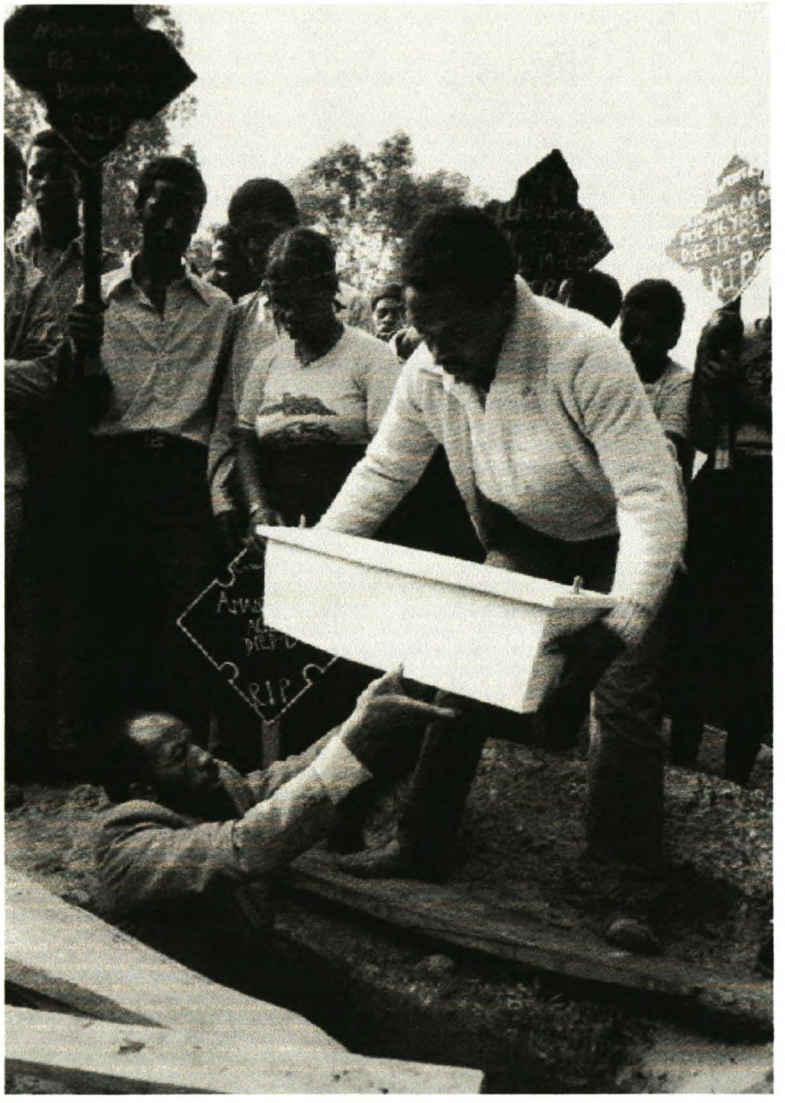

Fig 48. Gideon Mendel, *Crossroads residents bury six-month-old Amanda Fanisa, asphyxiated by tear gas fired during police action, Crossroads, Cape Town, March, 1985* (1985). Black and white photograph.

Fig 49. Guy Tillim, *A Pallbearer Presses on through tear gas at the funeral of one of 50 people killed by 'Witdoeke' vigilantes, Crossroads, Cape Town, 1986* (1986).
Black and white photograph.

Fig 50. Peter Magubane *The charred body of a black man was found under a burned truck* (1976). Black and white photograph.

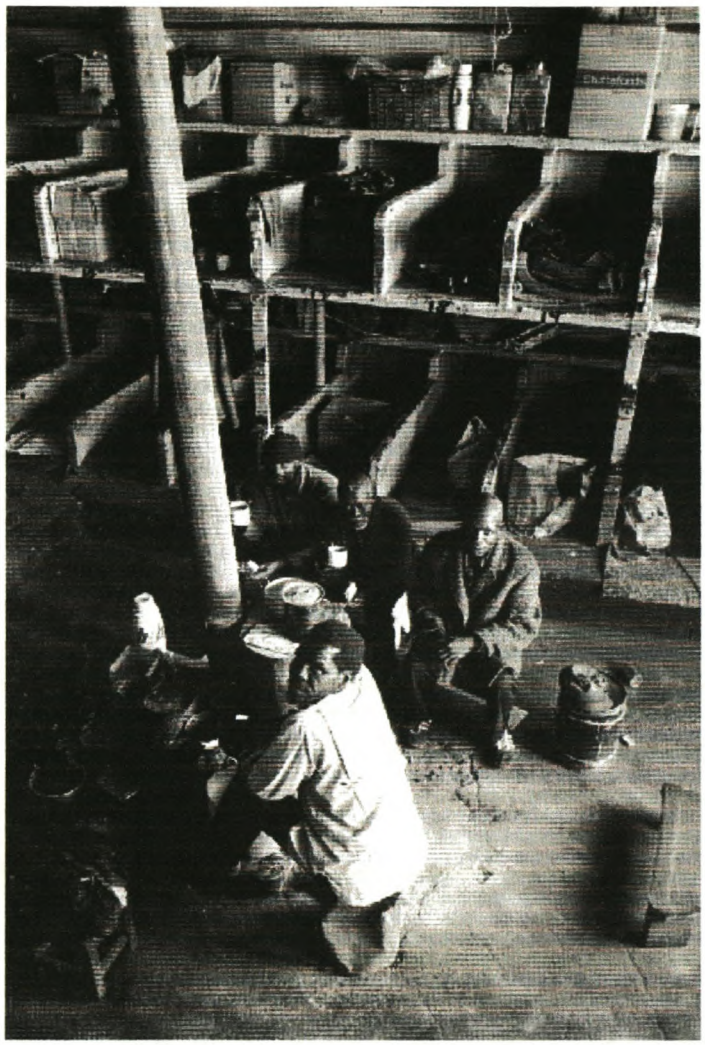

Fig 51. Ben Maclennan *Communal stove and concrete beds, compound, Johannesburg* (1980). Black and white photograph.

Fig 52. Roger Meintjies, *Hostel Dwellers , Khiki* (1987-89). Black and white photograph.

Fig 53. David Goldblatt, *New Year's Day Picnic, Hartebeespoort* (ca 1955 / 60). Black and white photograph. © Goldblatt.

Fig 54. David Goldblatt, *Farmers son with his nursemaid, Marico Bushveld, 1964* (1964). Black and white photograph.

Fig 55. David Goldblatt, *Girl in her new tutu on the stoep of her parents' house, Boksburg, 1980* (1980). Black and white photograph.
(Source: illustration, Goldblatt and Gordimer 1986: 53).

Fig 56. David Goldblatt, *African mineworker's bunk with pin-ups. Demolished compound nearSprings, July1965*, (1965). Black and white photograph. © David Goldblatt 1973.
(Source: illustration, Goldblatt Fig. 14 1973).

Fig 57. David Goldblatt, *While the stage is being lowered to a new position, the shaftsinking team cluster below in the centre of the shaft bottom. There they should escape any rock dislodged from the side wall by the movement of the stage.* (Ca. 1969-70).
Black and white photograph. © David Goldblatt 1973.

Fig 58. David Goldblatt, *Basuto shaftsinkers seeking work. President Steyn No. 4, Welkom, 1969*, (1969). Black and white photograph. © David Goldblatt 1973.
(Source: illustration, Goldblatt Fig. 14 1973).

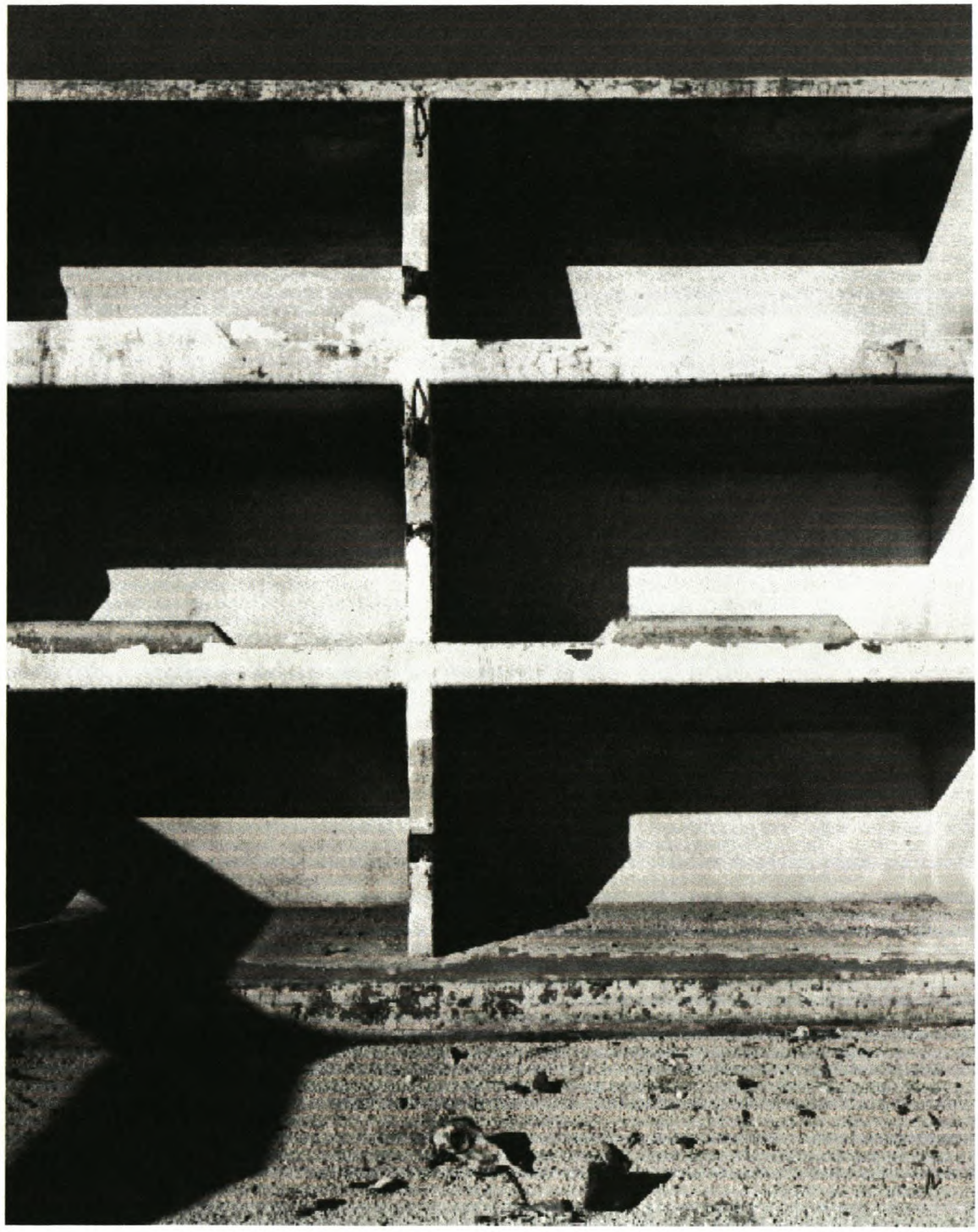

Fig 59. David Goldblatt, *Bunks in a compound for black miners, Simmer and Jack Gold mine, Germiston, 1965* (1965). Black and white photograph.
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Fig 60. David Goldblatt, *Mr and Mrs Richard Maponya, who live in dube, the most prestigious of the Soweto townships*, (ca 1973). Black and white photograph. © David Goldblatt 1973.

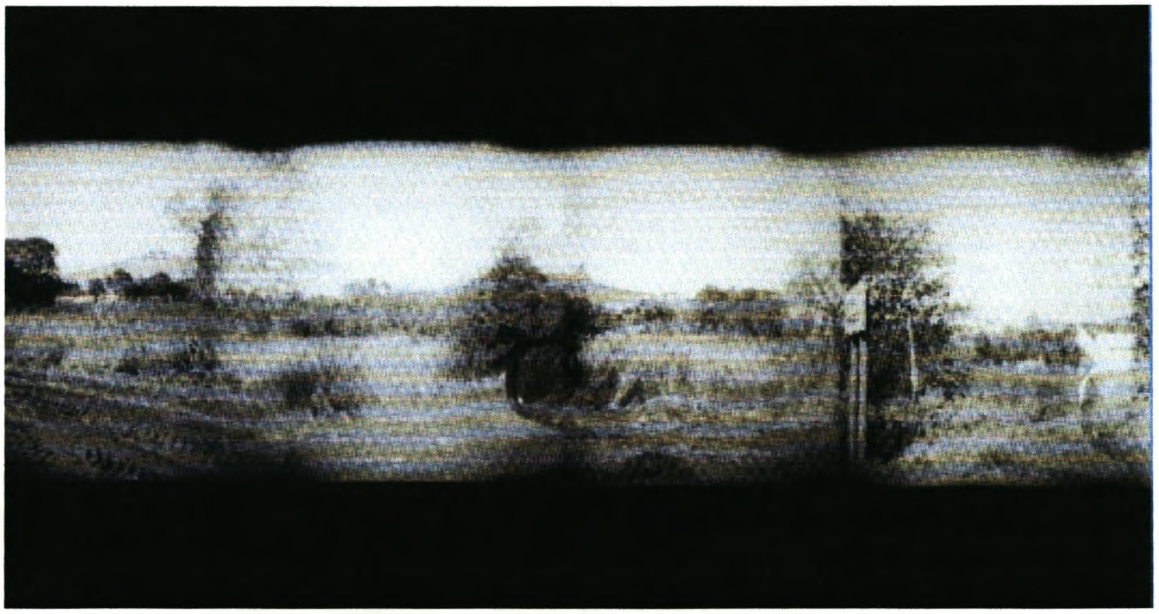

Fig 61. Jo Ractliffe, *Vlakplaas: 2nd July 1999 (drive-by shooting)* (1999). Black and white photograph.

Fig 62. Peter Magubane, *The notorious Green Car – a pot shot from the back seat* (1976).
Black and white photograph.

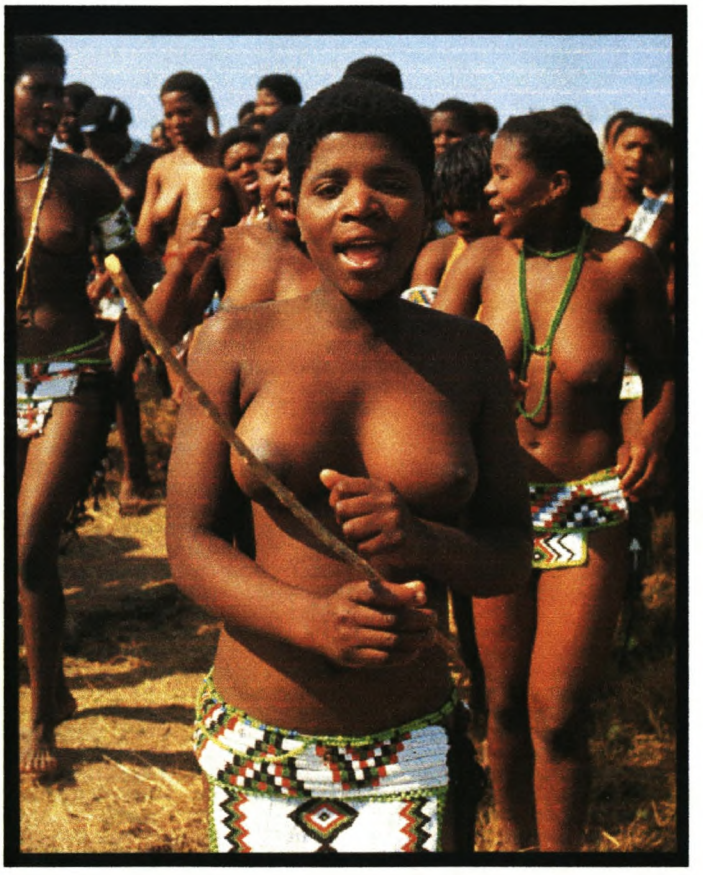

Fig 63. Peter Magubane, *Young women from the Nongoma area at the Reed Ceremony*, Colour photograph.

Fig 64. Andrew Ingram, *Five-year-old Llwelleyn Erasmus was found hanging in the bushes near Kalkfontein* (1997). Colour photograph. © *The Argus*.

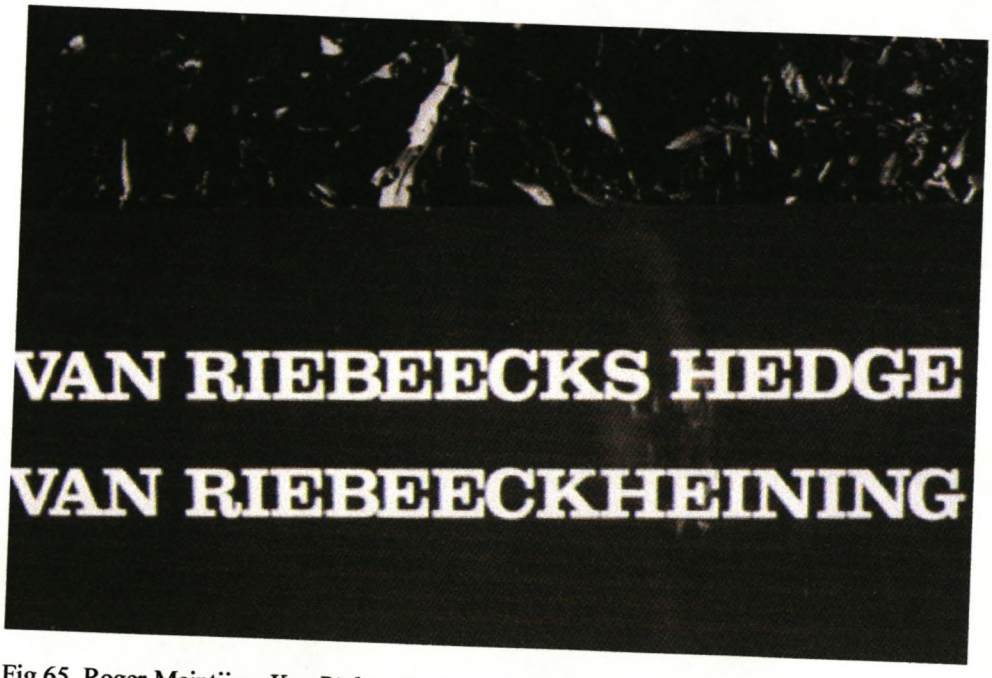

Fig 65. Roger Meintjies, *Van Riebeecks Hedge*. Black and white photograph.

Fig 66. Roger Meintjies, *Van Riebeecks Hedge*. Black and white photograph.

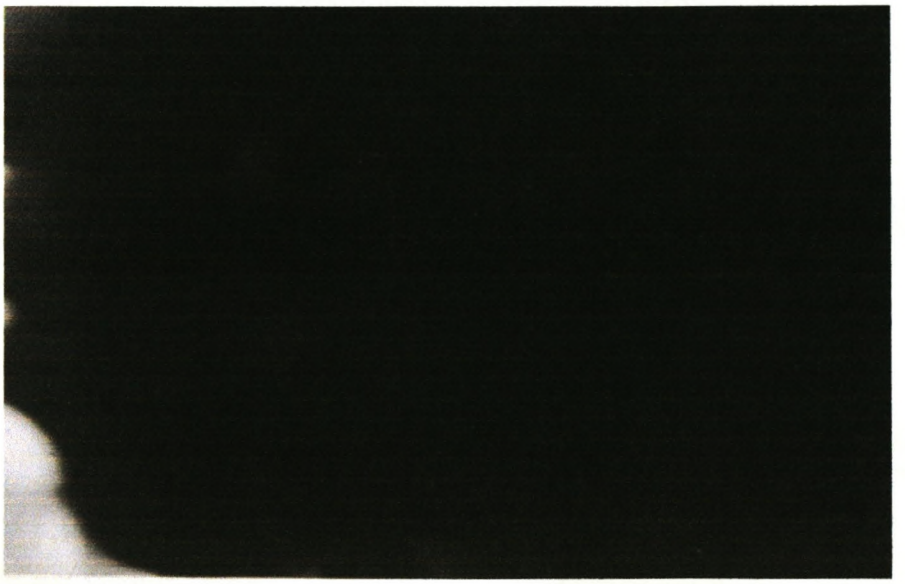

Fig 67. Roger Meintjies, *Van Riebeecks Hedge*. Black and white photograph.

Fig 68. David Goldblatt, *Remnant of a hedge planted in 1660 to keep the indigenous Khoikhoi out of the first European settlement in South Africa. 16 May 1993* (1993).
Black and white photograph.

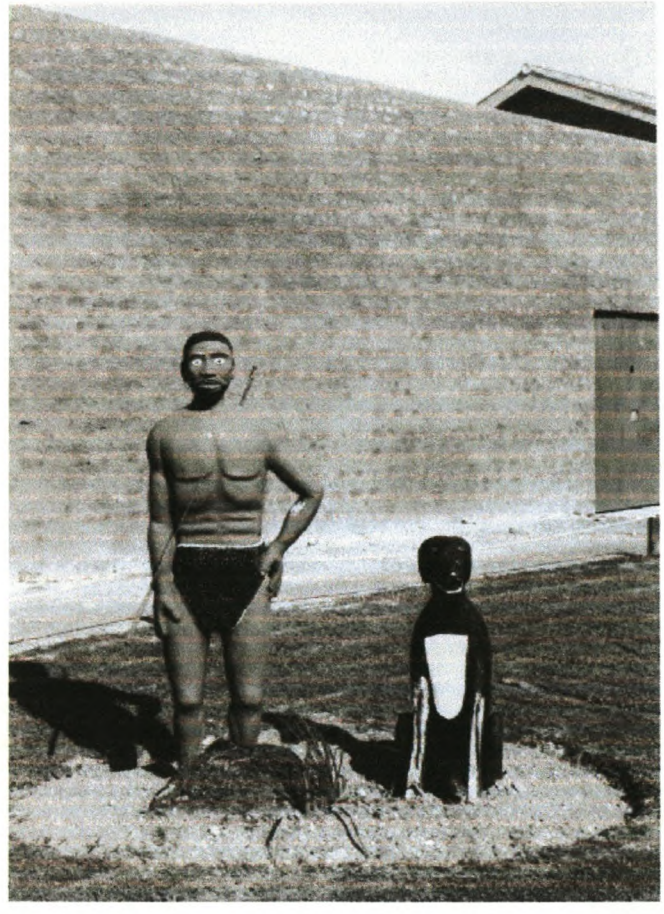

Fig 69. David Goldblatt, *Sculpture commemorating the first and the most recent political prisoners on 'The Island' maximum security prison, Robben Island. 16 July 1991.* (1991). Black and white photograph.

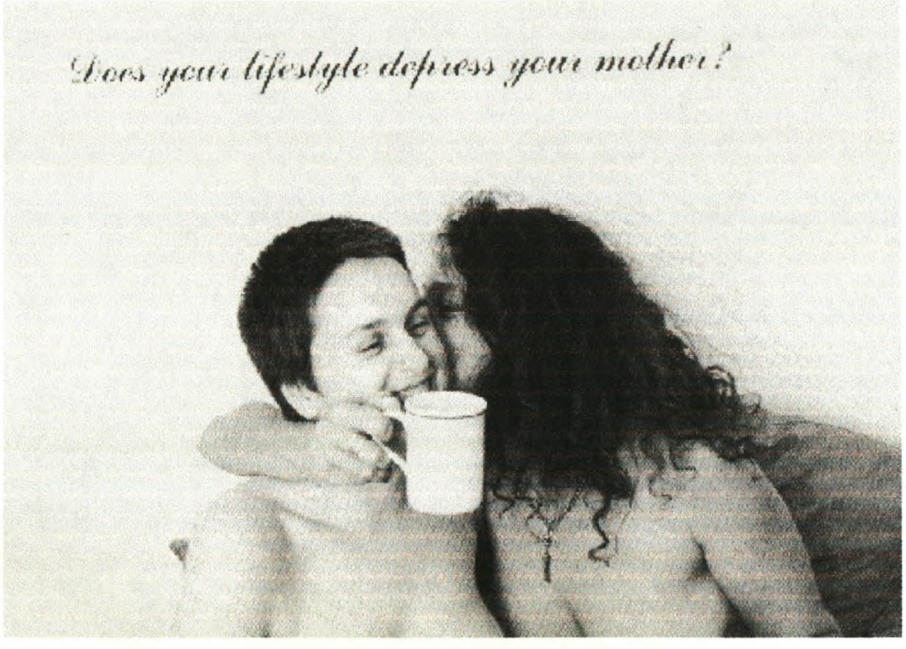

Fig 70. Jean Brundrit, *Does Your Lifestyle Depress Your Mother?*, (1998). Black and White photograph.

Fig 71. Terry Kurgan, *Maternal Exposures* (1997). Installation of black and white photographs with sound.

Fig 72. Geoff Grundlingh, *Portraits: the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Worcester*, (1999). Black and white photograph.

Fig 73. Zwelethu Mtwethwa, *Untitled* (1996). Colour photograph.

Fig 74. Zwelethu Mtwethwa, *Untitled* (1996). Colour photograph.

Fig 75. Dave Southwood, *Case*, (1999). Colour photograph.

Fig 76. Jo Ractliffe, *Pinhole photograph of End of Time billboard on the N9* outside Nieu Bathesda, Karoo (1999). Black and white photograph.

Fig 77. Sue Williamson, *Truth Games* (1999). Mixed media installation.

Fig 78. Jo Ractliffe, *Bridges for Baldassari* (1996).
Digital prints, colour prints, gouache, 102x 91 cm.

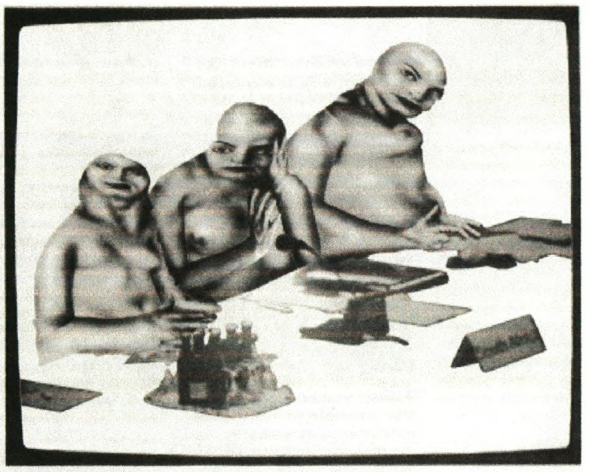

Fig 79. Minette Vari, *Alien* (1998). Video.

Fig 80. Minette Vari, *Zulu*, (1995). Colour Postcard.

Fig 81. Minette Vari, *Self Portrait 2* (1995). Photographic print 75x 102cm.

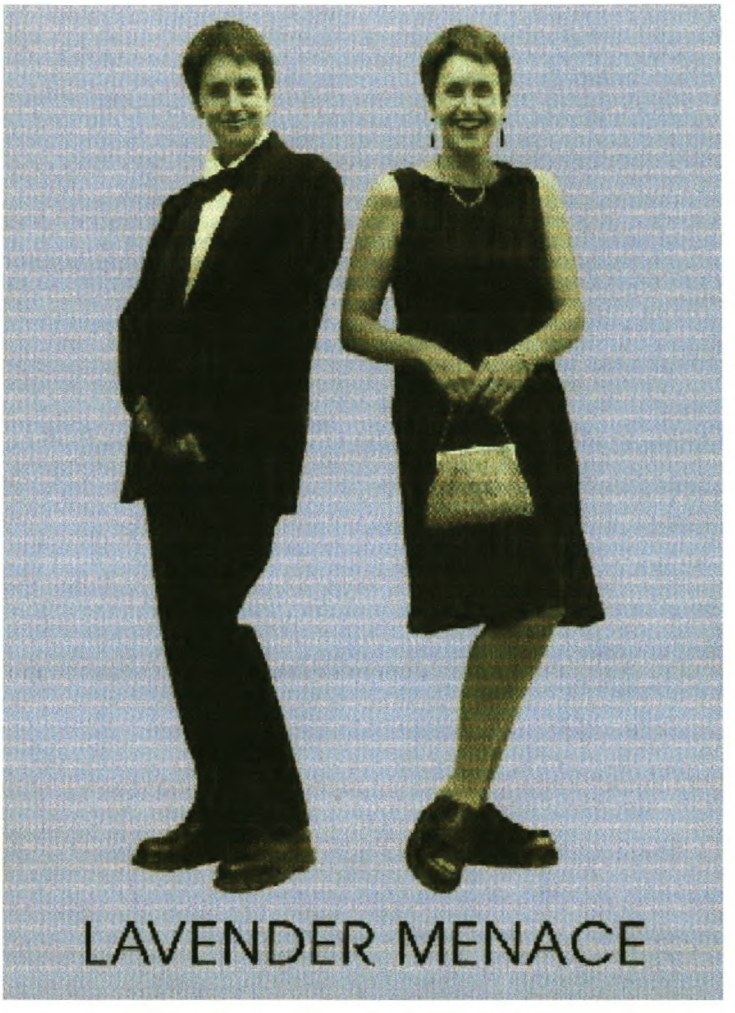

Fig 82. Jean Brundrit, *Dyke Career Calendar* (2000).
Black and white photograph, digital prints and calendar.

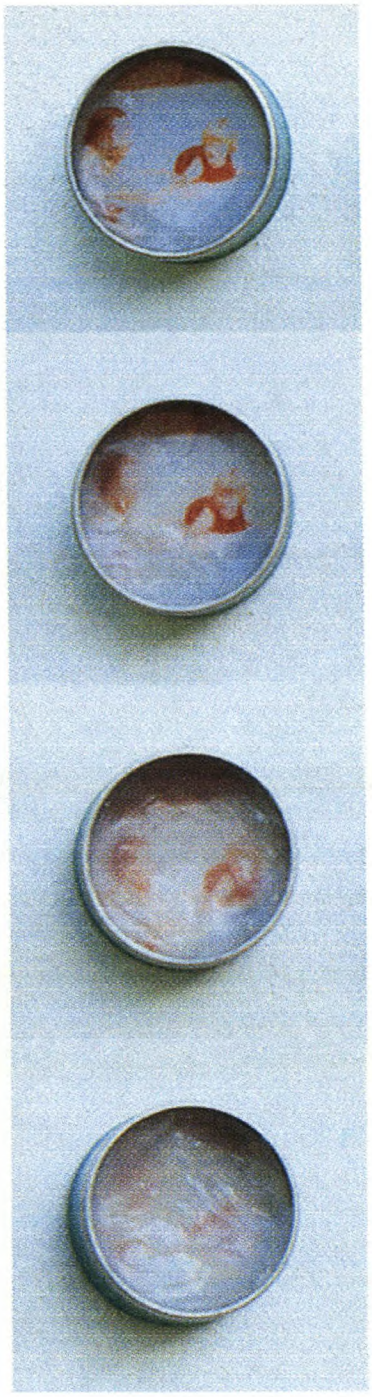

Fig 83. Bridget Baker, *So it Goes* (1996).
Tins, photograph, Vicks Vaporub,
3.5cm diam. X 2cm each.

Fig 84. Mustafa Maluka, *Malawi Squatter Camp, Bishop Lavis playground, Central Cape Town Apartment, Boeta Babes Spaza Shop, Bishop Lavis, Pro Gun March, Central Cape Town, Gardens, Cape Town* (1999).
Digital prints on photographic matt paper.

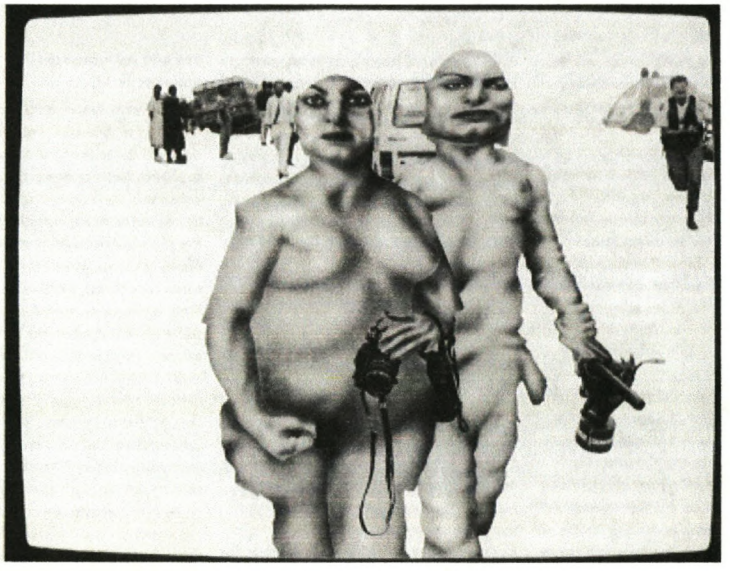

Fig 85. Minette Vari, *Alien* (1998). Video.

Fig 86. Sue Williamson, *A Tale of Two Cradocks* (1994).
Laser prints, wood, perspex, 42x330x20cm.

Fig 87. Doris and Mfeli Nkosi and Msizi Kuhlane, *Ghetto Diaries: Across the Divide* (1997) Video produced by *Mail and Guardian* for SABC 1.

Fig 88. Jean Brundrit, *Valued Families* (1995). Silver print on fibre paper, 50x50 cm, Edition of 3, Collection : Gertrude Posel Gallery, University of the Witwatersrand.

Fig 89. Jane Alexander, *Triumph over Capitalism* (1995).
Photo-montage, 17,8x22,5cm.

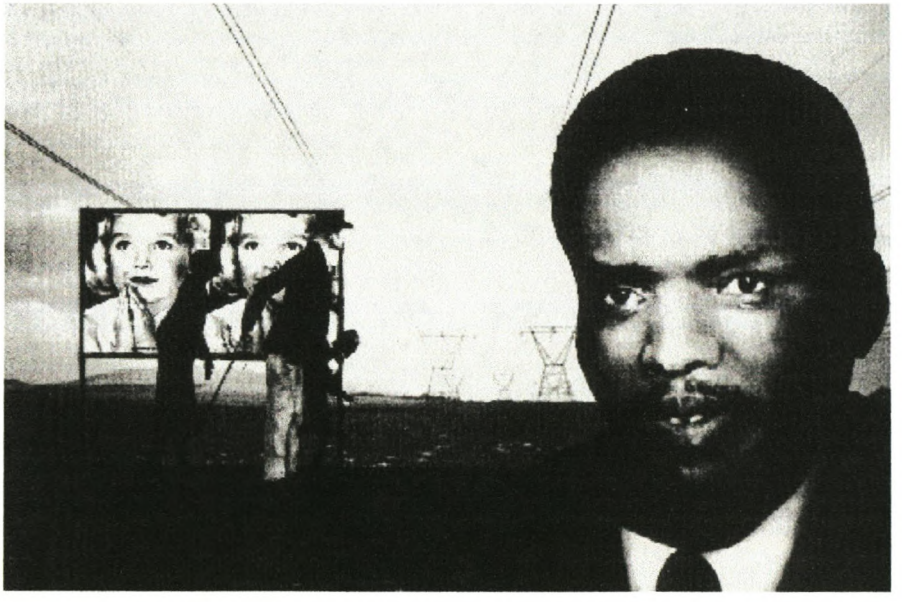

Fig 90. Jane Alexander, *Portrait of a Man with Landscape and Procession (Bantu Stephen Biko 1946-1977)* (1995). Photo-montage, 17,8x22,5cm, collection: South African National Gallery.

Fig 91. Jo Ractliffe, *Nadir* (1986-88). Photo-lithographs with silkscreen.

Fig 92. Jo Ractliffe, *re Shooting Diana* (1995).

Fig 93. Jo Ractliffe, *re Shooting Diana* (1995).
Silver prints on fibre paper, glass, steel.

Fig 94. Jo Ractliffe, *N1 every Hundered Kilometers* (1998). Black and white photographs.

LIST OF CATALOGUE ILLUSTRATIONS

***Framing the Shadow* (2001) Catalogue figure 3**

1. Mendel	**2. Schadeberg**	**3. Mendel**	**4. Collingridge**	**5. Silva**
6. Mendel	**7. Magubane**	**8. Berry**	**9. Tillim**	**10. Magubane**
11. (Joyce: 1990: 90)	**12. Hartman**	**13.Silva**	**14. Mendel**	**15. Magubane**
16. Hartman	**17. Mendel**	**18. Magubane**	**19. Mendel**	**20. Magubane**

Photographic credits for *Framing the Shadow* (2001) Catalogue Figure 3

1. After **Gideon Mendel** 'Youths flee after clashing with Police following a funeral in Duduza township, Transvaal, May, 1985. Black townships across South Africa came to resemble war zones, as battles raged with police and army units. By late 1985, the streets of Duduza Township were marked by killings and burnings. Lacking weapons, black youths improvised defences that included erecting head–high trip wires against patrolling open -top vehicles and digging 'tank traps' during the night when armoured vehicles were lured into ambushes. To deal with the crises, township residents formed committees, which in effect became alternative local governments' (Mendel in Tilman and Harris (eds.) 1989: 43).

2. After **Jürgen Schadeberg** 'Manilal Ghandi, in 1952, following close behind Pat Duncan, in defying the permit laws in Germiston Township' (Schadeberg: 1987: 36).

3. After **Gideon Mendel** 'a mother says goodbye to her son as he prepares to flee their home to escape right – wing vigilantes in Leandra township, Transvaal, April, 1986. Many Leandra children fled to Johannesburg, seeking refuge in churches and the homes of relatives in urban township. Disrupted education and economic hardships are hazards in young lives' (Mendel In Tilman and Harris (eds.) 1989: 52).

4. After **Chris Collingridge** 'Side view of the AWB with the press' (Waller: 2000: 271).

5. After **Joao Silva** *Township* (1992) 'An alleged Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) supporter is hacked to death by Boipatong residents during the funeral of 42 residents killed during the massacre in 1992. The supporter was beaten, shot, hacked, driven over by a combi and finally set alight as retaliation for the massacre of the previous week. I and *Weekly Mail* photographer Guy Adams fled for our lives moments after this picture was taken' (Silva in Waller 2000: 279).

6. After **Gideon Mendel** 'Youths flee after clashing with Police following a funeral in Duduza township, Transvaal, May, 1985. Black townships across South Africa came to resemble war zones, as battles raged with police and army units. By late 1985, the streets of Duduza township were marked by killings and burnings. Lacking weapons, black youths improvised defences that included erecting head–high trip wires against patrolling open -top vehicles and digging 'tank traps' during the night when armoured vehicles were lured into ambushes. To deal with the crises, township residents formed committees, which in effect became alternative local governments' (Mendel in Tilman and Harris (eds.) 1989: 43).

7. After **Peter Magubane** untitled, undated (Magubane 1978: unpaginated).

8. After **Ian Berry** '1981, Cape Town. Police disperse crowds protesting against the removal of squatters from the crossroads' (Berry 1996: 100).

9. After **Guy Tillim** 'A pall bearer presses on through tea gas at the funeral of one of 50 people killed by 'Witdoeke' vigilantes, Crossroads, Cape Town, May, 1986' (Tillim in Tilman and Harris (eds.) 1989: 11).

10. After **Peter Magubane** 'At Kwa Themba, just outside the stadium where a funeral was being held for the victims of police gunfire, a suspected police informer's car was overturned by the mourners and set alight. As the flames shot heavenward, these woman sang and danced derisively' (Magubane 1993: 117).

11. Photo from Argus Africa News Service / The *Star*'s archives (Joyce 1990: 90). 'Fire reflects the fury simmering in the townships'.

12. After **Dave Hartman** 'Barricades are erected on Belgravia Road, Athlone township, Cape Town, September, 1985. As violence spread through the townships, barricades were thrown up

on the streets where young people battled with the police. Within two months the death toll had risen, and many were injured. The mood of resistance was reflected on the streets: 'All the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, the grandmothers and the grandfathers, the dogs and the cats – they have all joined in the struggle' '(Hartman in Tilman and Harris (eds.) 1989: 32).

13. After **Joao Silva** *Township* (1992) 'An alleged Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) supporter is hacked to death by Boipatong residents during the funeral of 42 residents killed during the massacre in 1992. The supporter was beaten, shot, hacked, driven over by a combi and finally set alight as retaliation for the massacre of the previous week. I and *Weekly Mail* photographer Guy Adams fled for our lives moments after this picture was taken' (Silva in Waller 2000: 279).

14. After **Gideon Mendel** 'Mourners carry the coffin of one of eight youths killed in clashes with the police in Alexandra township, Johannesburg, May, 1986. Masked mourners are a common sight at funerals as people try to conceal; their identities and protect themselves from the unexpected tear gas attacks' (Mendel in Tilman and Harris (eds.) 1989: 93).

15. After **Peter Magubane** 'At Kwa Themba, just outside the stadium where a funeral was being held for the victims of police gunfire, a suspected police informer's car was overturned by the mourners and set alight. As the flames shot heavenward, these woman sang and danced derisively' (Magubane 1993: 117).

16. After **Dave Hartman** 'Barricades are erected on Belgravia Road, Athlone township, Cape Town, September, 1985. As violence spread through the townships, barricades were thrown up on the streets where young people battled with the police. Within two months the death toll had risen, and many were injured. The mood of resistance was reflected on the streets: 'All the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, the grandmothers and the grandfathers, the dogs and the cats – they have all joined in the struggle' '(Hartman in Tilman and Harris (eds.) 1989: 32).

17. After **Gideon Mendel** 'Police attack youths early in the morning on the day of the Pollsmoor Prison March. United Democratic Front leaders had called on people to march to Pollsmoor prison in 1985 to demand the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners. The march marked the beginning of intense clashes between police and youths in Cape Town. While they were marching for Mandela and other prisoners, the students were also protesting against the state's education system, which offers blacks inferior education. Demanding local control of education, these students were at the forefront of the drive for 'people's education.' The police responded by intervening vigorously and sometimes violently in schools where boycotts were in progress' (Mendel in Tilman and Harris (eds.) 1989: 31).

18. After **Peter Magubane** 'This was the fate of several men who drove into the midst of battle between the police and a mob in Alexander township. They were in a black car that I noticed coming down the street toward us. One of the occupants shouted "black power" with his clenched fist out the window. The police immediately opened fire and caused the vehicle to overturn killing two of the men. There was no other provocation. The whole area was like a battlefield. The rioters burned many vehicles belonging to white businesses' (Magubane 1978: 108).

19. After **Gideon Mendel** 'Police attack youths early in the morning on the day of the Pollsmoor Prison March. United Democratic Front leaders had called on people to march to Pollsmoor prison in 1985 to demand the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners. The march marked the beginning of intense clashes between police and youths in Cape Town. While they were marching for Mandela and other prisoners, the students were also protesting against the state's education system, which offers blacks inferior education. Demanding local control of education, these students were at the forefront of the drive for 'people's education.' The police responded by intervening vigorously and sometimes violently in schools where boycotts were in progress' (Mendel in Tilman and Harris (eds.) 1989: 31).

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Watching the Watcher (2000)

1. No photo credit given (Suttner/Cronin : 1986: 38)	2. Mendel	3. Magubane	4. No photo credit given (Harker 1994: 120)	5. Collinridge
6.	7. Jason	8. Khuele	9. Josephy	10. No photo credit given (Vyshinsky: 1987: 63)
11. Witt	12. Schadeberg	13. Magubane	14. Magubane	15. No photo credit given (Harker 1994: 63)
16. Nunn	17. Magubane	18. Weinberg	19. No photo credit given (Harker 1994: 145)	20. Magubane

Photographic credits for *Watching the Watcher* (2001) Catalogue Figure 6

1. In *30 Years of the Freedom Charter* (Suttner and Cronin 1986: 38).

2. After **Gideon Mendel** 'The son of chief Ampie Mayisa, leading the singing and chanting mourners, defends his father's funeral cortege from vigilante attack, Leandra township, Transvaal, January 1986. Mayisa led his community successfully in its fight against forced removal. Although he sought police protection against vigilantes, he was murdered by them soon after the police denied his appeal. Right wing vigilante groups emerged in many communities that were resisting removal (Mendel in Tilman and Harris (eds.) 1989: 77).

3. After **Peter Magubane** 'Followed by the unblinking eyes of foreign television network cameras, anti-apartheid campaigner Winnie Mandela shows a group of German politicians around Mshenguville shanty town squatter camps in Soweto' (Magubane 1990: 37). Magubane's image is a colour photograph.

4. In *The Legacy of Apartheid* (Harker 1994: 120).

5. After **Chris Collingridge** 'Side view of the AWB with the press' (Waller 2000: 270).

6. Photographer unknown.

7. After **Fanie Jason** 'A four-year journey from political prisoner to president began for Nelson Mandela on 11 February 1990. He addressed a huge crowd at the Cape Town City Hall just hours after his release' (Oakes 1994: 6).

8. After **Tladi Khuele** '*Homeless* December 1995' (Waller 2000: 159).

9. Svea Josephy 'Photographer Eric Miller outside the Wynberg magistrates court after President Mbeki addressed the magistrates in Cape Town, September, 2000'.

10. In *Southern Africa: Apartheid, Colonialism, Aggression* (Vyshinsky 1987:63).

11. After **James Witt** 'Flanked by his wife Winnie and leading activist Cyril Ramaphosa, ANC leader Nelson Mandela savors his first minutes of freedom' (Oakes: 1994: 504).

12. After **Jürgen Shadeberg** 'On 27 October 1955, watched by 2000 protesters and some bewildered state employees, the four representatives Rahima Moosa, Lilian Ngoyi Helen Joseph and Sophie Williams – one from each race group – walked up to the government offices and left petitions outside the office of the Minister of Native Affairs' (Schadeberg 1991: 105).

13. After **Peter Magubane** 'Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, President of Inkatha' (Johnson 1979: 91).

14. After **Peter Magubane** in undated and uncaptioned in *Soweto* (Magubane 1978: unpaginated).

15. In *The Legacy of Apartheid* 'Rev. Allan Boesak, president of the World Alliance of reformed churches (WARC) at a funeral in Duduza township, Transvaal, 1985' (Harker 1994: 120).

16. After **Cedric Nunn** 'KwaZulu homeland Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi, on the left, and Goodwill Zwelitthini, the traditional king of the Zulu's, appear at the ceremonial opening of the KwaZulu legislature in 1986' (Nunn in Tilman and Harris (eds.) 1989: 15).

17. After **Peter Magubane** 'Helen Suzman, veteran anti-apartheid campaigner and a long-time member of parliament, visits a crèche in Moletsane. She is committed to the principles of a fair

society and to the belief that today's children are the building blocks of future social justice' (Magubane: 1990: 149).

18. After **Paul Weinberg** 'Mrs. Elize Botha, wife of the state president and Mrs. Tshabalala, wife of the mayor of Soweto, leave the town council building in August 1984 after President and Mrs. Botha were granted the "freedom of the township" in a ceremony derived from old British tradition' (Weinberg in Tilman and Harris (eds.) 1989: 14).

19. In *The Legacy of Apartheid* 'The funeral of trade-union organiser Andries Raditsela who died of a brain injury in hospital two days after being detained by police. On the day of the funeral, at the Tsakane township in the East Rand, workers downed tools for two hours as a tribute, 1985' (Harker 1994: 145).

20. After **Peter Magubane** 'Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, President of Inkatha' (Johnson 1979: 91).

Photographic credits for *Arrested Moments* (2001) Catalogue Figure 9

1. Brown	**2. Oostebroek**	**3. Schadeberg**	**4. Schönfeldt**
5. No photo credit given (Magubane 1993: 119)	**6. No photo credit given (Harker 1994: 148)**	**7. Berry**	**8. Scadeberg**

Photographic credits for *Arrested Moments* (2001) Catalogue Figure 9

1. After **Robin Brown** '*Carried off*. Unceremoniously a group of policemen carry off a newsman who was reporting on a confrontation between students and authorities on the steps of St. George's Cathedral' (*Best Press Pictures 1972-1981*: 6).

2. After **Ken Oostebroek** 'Kevin Carter photographing the chaos that erupted outside Soweto's Protea police station when the police opened fire on residents protesting the assassination of South African Communist Party leader Chris Hani. The clash left six people dead and at least 200 injured. 1993' (Oostebroek: 1998:104).

3. After **Jürgen Schadeberg** Peter Magubane was arrested for photographing the charge in front of the court. Fellow photographer Jürgen Shadeberg recorded the moment. Magubane was later released, but not before his film had been removed from his camera' (Magubane 1993: 61).

4. After **Joachim Schönfeldt** from Calendar 1998. Printed calendar and colour photographs (Lundstrom and Pierre 1998: 131).

5. No photo credit given in *Women of South Africa: the Fight for Freedom*. 'Peter Magubane is arrested in Alexandria while photographing a march in 1990' (Magubane 1993: 119).

6. No photo credit given in *The Legacy of Apartheid*. 'Police arrest a foreign television crew as vigilantes attack the KTC squatter camp, Cape Town, 1986' (Harker 1994: 148).

7. After **Ian Berry** 'Johannesburg 1956. *Drum* photographer Jürgen Schadeberg arrested during a demonstration at the Treason Trial' (Schadeberg 1994: 49).

8. After **Jürgen Schadeberg** Peter Magubane was arrested for photographing the charge in front of the court. Fellow photographer Jürgen Shadeberg recorded the moment. Magubane was later released, but not before his film had been removed from his camera' (Magubane 1993: 61).

Photographic credits for *Bang-Bang Shots* (2001) Catalogue Figure 8

1. Ngenya	**2. Ngwenya**	**3. Ngwenya**
4. Steve Hilton-Barber	**5. Boshoff**	**6. photographer unknown (Oostebroek 1998: 92).**
7. Silva	**8. Silva**	**9. Silva**

1. After **Juda Ngwenya** 'A seriously wounded Greg Marinovich is helped by US journalist James Nachtwey as Gary Bernard from the *Star* and a National Peace Keeping Force member lift Oosterbroek's body in the background. To the left is Oostebroek's body in the background. To the left is Oostebroek's colleague and close friend Joao Silva' (Oostebroek 1998: 140).

2. After **Juda Ngwenya** 'A seriously wounded Greg Marinovich is helped by US journalist James Nachtwey as Gary Bernard from the *Star* and a National Peace Keeping Force member lift Oosterbroek's body in the background. To the left is Oostebroek's body in the background. To the left is Oostebroek's colleague and close friend Joao Silva' (Oostebroek 1998: 140).

3. After **Juda Ngwenya** 'A seriously wounded Greg Marinovich is helped by US journalist James Nachtwey as Gary Bernard from the *Star* and a National Peace Keeping Force member lift Oosterbroek's body in the background. To the left is Oostebroek's body in the background. To the left is Oostebroek's colleague and close friend Joao Silva' (Oostebroek 1998: 140).

4. After **Steve Hilton-Barber** 'Johannesburg 1993' (Oostebroek 1998: cover).

5. After **Ruvan Boshoff** 'Friend and collegue Ruvan Boshoff and Oostebroek brothers Ty and Ken in the bathroom at the Cabanas after photographing a boxing match at Sun City. 1987' (Oostebroek 1998: 102).

6. In *The Invisable Line: The Life and Photography of Ken Oostebroek* photographer unknown. 'Kevin Carter and Oostebroek. East Rand 1993' (Oostebroek 1998: 92).

7. After **Joao Silva** 'An NPKF member and Gary Bernard prepare to lift Oosebroek's body into an armoured vehicle. 18 April 1994' (Oostebroek 1998: 141).

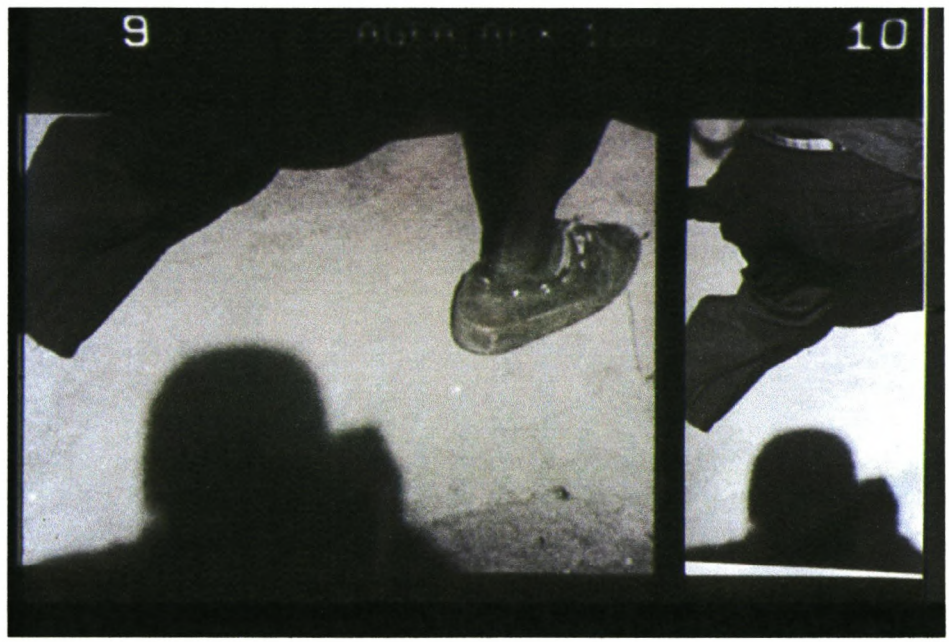
8. After **Joao Silva** 'An NPKF member and Gary Bernard prepare to lift Oosebroek's body into an armoured vehicle. 18 April 1994' (Oostebroek 1998: 141).

9. After **Joao Silva** 'An NPKF member and Gary Bernard prepare to lift Oosebroek's body into an armoured vehicle. 18 April 1994' (Oostebroek 1998: 141).

Catalogue Figure 1. View of exhibition.

Catalogue Figure 2. View of exhibition.

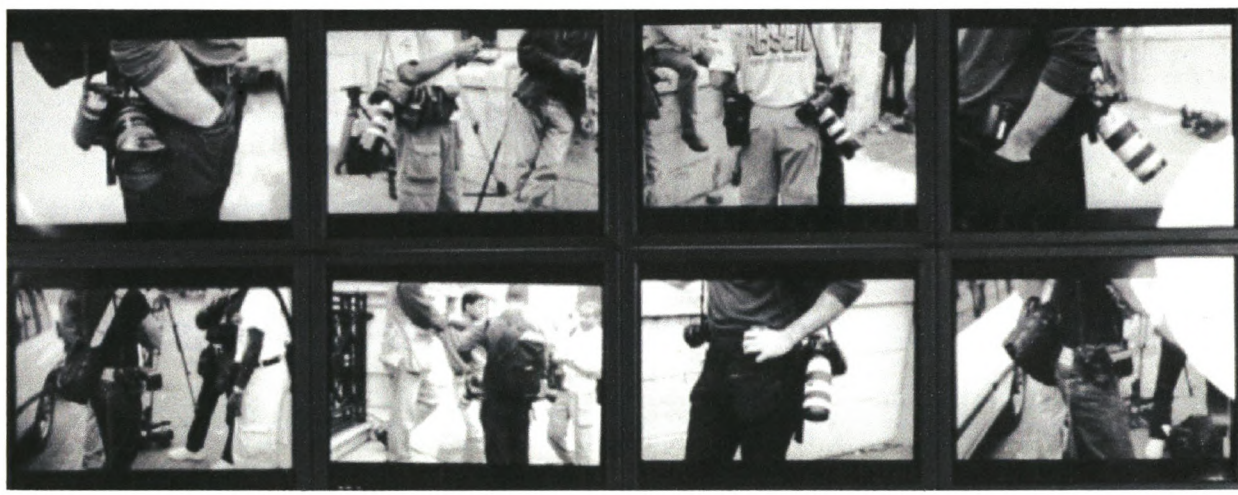
Catalogue Figure 3. *Framing the Shadow* (2001). Composite of black and white photographs. 2,5m x 1,6m.



Catalogue Figure 4. *Framing the Shadow* (2001). Detail.

Catalogue Figure 5. *Framing the Shadow* (2001). Detail.

Catalogue Figure 6. *Watching the Watcher* (2001). Composite of black and white photographs. 1250cm x 80cm.



Catalogue figure 7, *Press Stud* (2001). Black and white photograph.

Catalogue figure 8. *Bang-Bang Shots* (2001). Composite of black and white photographs. 60 x 75cm.

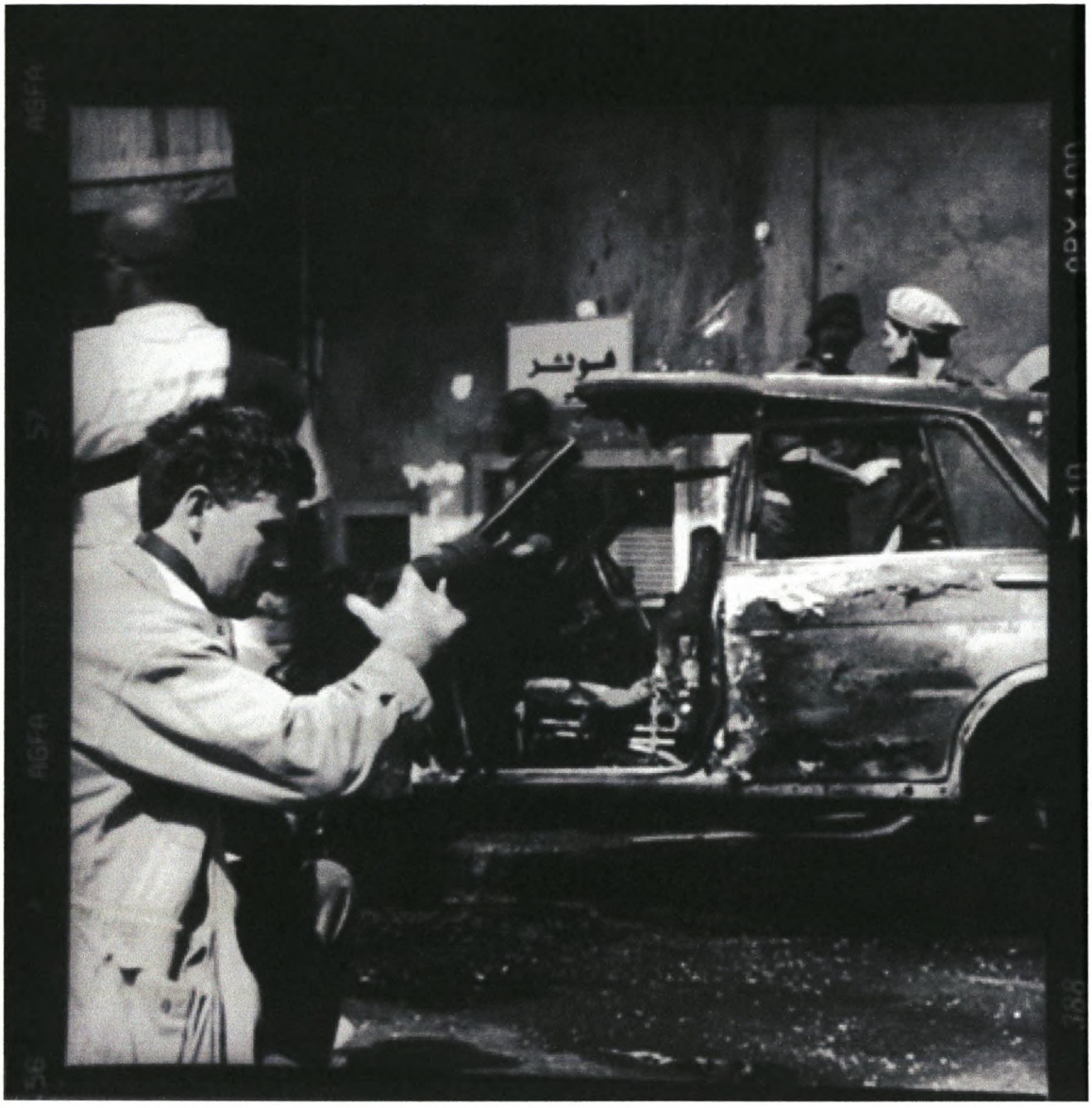
Catalogue Figure 9. *Arrested Moments* (2001). Composite of black and white photographs. 40cm x 100cm.

Catalogue Figure 10. *Framing Documentary* (2001). Digital print. 1,2m x 1,5m.

Catalogue Figure 11. *Framing Documentary* (2001). Digital print. 1,2m x 1,5m.

Catalogue Figure 12. *Framing Documentary* (2001). Digital print. 1,2m x 1,5m.

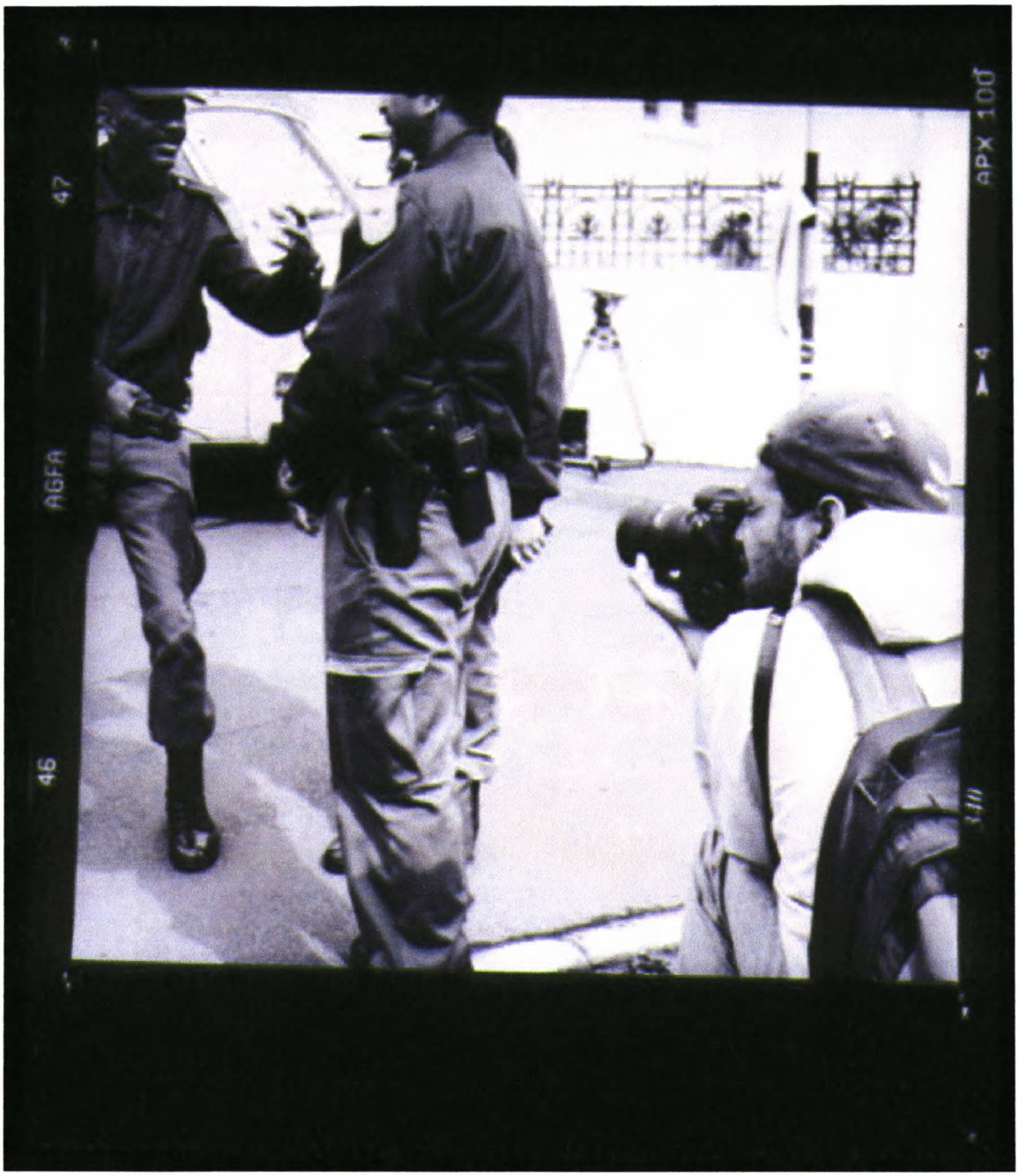
Catalogue Figure 13. *Framing Documentary* (2001). Digital print. 1,2m x 1,5m.



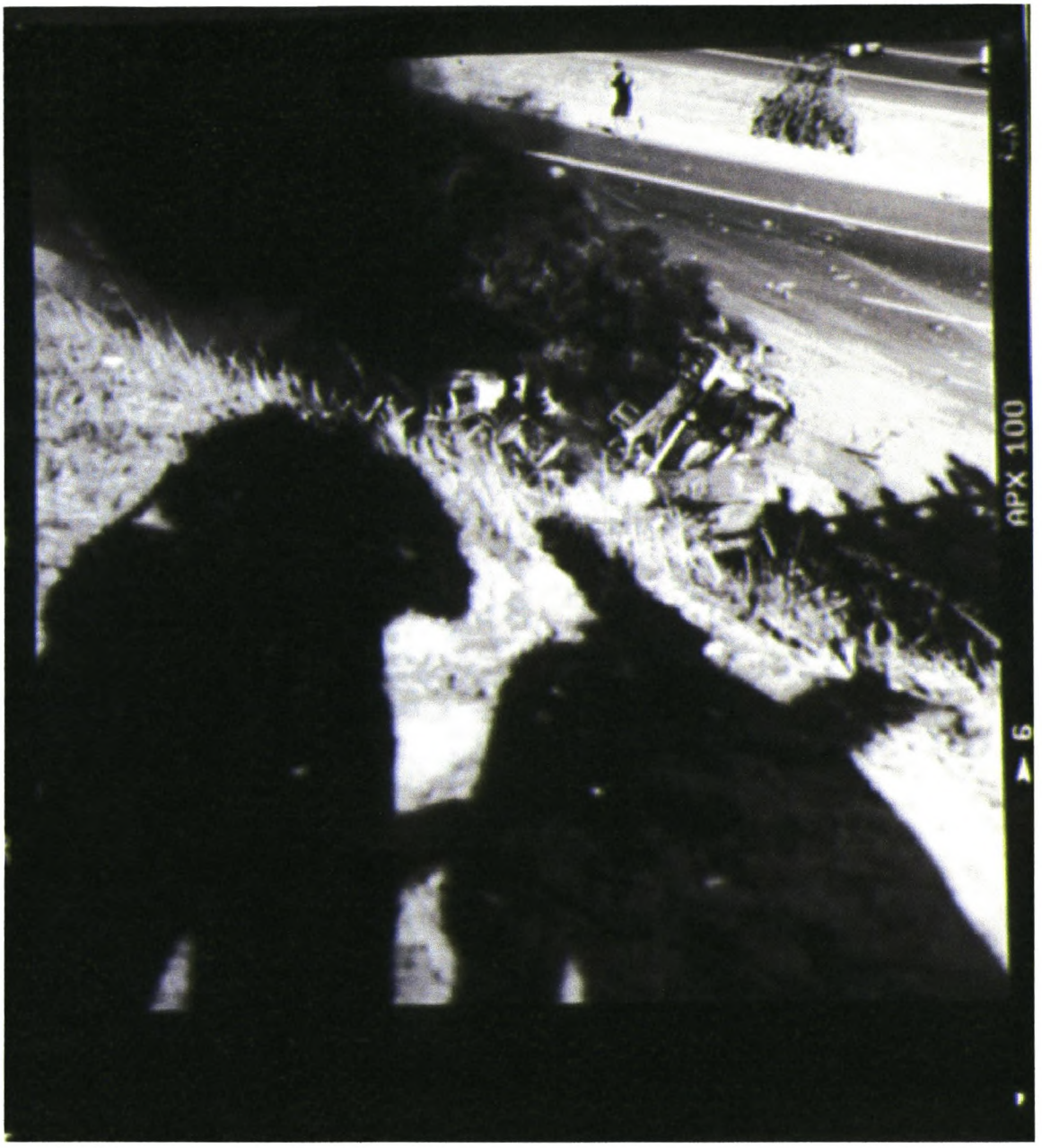
Catalogue Figure 14. *Framing Documentary* (2001). Digital print. 1,2 x 1,5m.

Catalogue Figure 15. *Framing Documentary* (2001). Digital print. 1,2 x 1,5m.

Catalogue Figure 16. *Framing Documentary* (2001). Digital print. 1,2 x 1,5m.



Catalogue Figure 17. *Framing Documentary* (2001). Digital print. 1,2 x 1,5m.



Catalogue Figure 18. *Framing Documentary* (2001). Digital print. 1,2 x 1,5m.

Catalogue Figure 19. *Displacing Disability* (2001). Composite of 10 black and white photographs. 100cm x 40cm.

Catalogue Figure 20. *Displacing Disability* (2001). Composite of 10 black and white photographs. 100cm x 40 cm.

Catalogue Figure 21. *Displacing Disability* (2001). Composite of black and white photographs. 100cm x 40cm.